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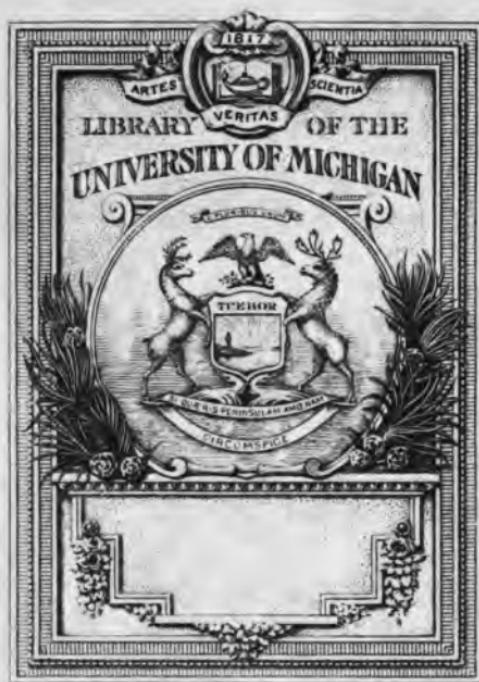
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THE HISTORY
OF
THE HUGUENOTS

During the Sixteenth Century.

BY W. S. BROWNING, ESQ.

“Tu causa malorum
Facta tribus dominis communis Roma.”

LUCAN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL II.



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A HISTORY OF THE HUGUENOTS

DURING

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAP. XXX.

CONVERSION OF NAVARRE AND CONDE ;—EXECUTION OF
BRIQUEMAUT AND CAVAGNES ;—FOURTH CIVIL WAR ;—
SIEGE OF ROCHELLE ;—CONSPIRACY OF THE POLITIQUES ;
—DEATH OF CHARLES IX.

ON the morning of the St. Bartholomew, Charles IX. had ordered the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé to abjure their heresy ; when order was restored they were again summoned before his presence. Catherine had employed Cosmo Ruggieri, her countryman, to cast the nativity of the princes : he made the calculation with great apparent care and minuteness, and announced that the state had nothing to fear from them.* Repeated efforts had been made in the meantime to win them over by the exhortations of Maldonatus, a Jesuit, assisted by other theologians : Navarre displayed some reluctance to the change, but Condé gave a most decided refusal. The King's anger being inflamed by this

* Mem. de la vie de J. A. de Thou, p. 244.

opposition to his will, he was inclined to renew the dreadful scenes in Paris, which even then continued to desolate the provinces. He vowed he would put to death every Huguenot persisting in heresy, beginning with the Prince of Condé; he ordered his guards to be drawn out, and then sent for the two princes. The young Queen of France, whose charms gave her some influence over her husband's violent temper, entreated him with tears to desist from his purpose, and wait a little longer: Charles was persuaded to send away his guards, but still ordered the princes to be brought before him.* Navarre was induced to comply with the King's wish, more by the example of De Rosiers (a Huguenot minister, who had abjured), than from the effect of conviction; but Condé was inflexible. Charles, with a fierce look, said to him, "*the Mass, Death, or the Bastille!*" and sent him back to confinement.†

In a short time the prince yielded; and after proper instructions from his uncle, the Cardinal of Bourbon, he went to mass with the princess his wife, and the different members of the Bourbon family. They all received absolution; and that they should not afterwards disavow their consent, Navarre and Condé were made to write to the Pope for his approval of their return to the church of Rome. The King of Navarre also published the declaration required of him, which prohibited the exercise of the reformed religion in his states.‡

* Lapopoliniere, Maimbourg, D'Aubigné. This occurred 9th Sept. 1572.

† Hist. Univ. D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 30. et Mathieu, liv. 6. p. 348.

‡ The letter to the Pope and the declaration are given at length by Lapopoliniere.

Zealous catholics argued upon these conversions, to shew the utility of the massacre ; and the King's counsellors recommended another cruel measure to prove its necessity : Briquemaut and Cavagnes were brought to trial for the alleged plot of the Huguenots. Briquemaut had taken refuge in Walsingham's house, where he was seized in the dress of a groom.* They were both condemned to be hanged, as convicted of all the crimes which the decree of the parliament attributed to the protestants : the sentence was carried into execution at the end of October. Tavannes informs us† that they were both offered their lives, if they would confess the existence of a conspiracy, but they refused to listen to such terms ; while De Thou declares,‡ that Briquemaut himself made great efforts to avoid death. He offered not only to acknowledge Coligny's guilt, but even to serve against Rochelle. Cavagnes, however, exhorted him to display the firmness for which he was celebrated ; and from that time his intrepidity never forsook him.

They were drawn on a hurdle, and the effigy of Coligny was placed beside them. The populace insulted them as they went to execution, and afterwards offered every possible indignity to their bodies. The King and the Queen Mother were at the window of the Hotel-de-Ville, to witness the dreadful spectacle ; when in order to make the representation more complete for the gratification of their vengeance, a toothpick was placed in the Admiral's mouth.§

* Lapopeliniere et Mathieu.

† Memoirs, p. 419. In this respect he agrees with an account published at Edinburgh in 1573.—*De Furoribus Gallicis*, a work generally attributed to Francis Hotman.

‡ Book 53. vol. vi. p. 460.

§ De Thou, liv. 53. The Admiral had a habit of constantly using

“The court,” says the Abbé Crillon, “thought to have drowned Calvinism in the blood of its principal defenders; but that *Hydra* resumed fresh vigour.”* A fourth civil war became inevitable: the government had taken measures for seizing the towns which were still in the hands of the protestants, but were successful only at La Charité. A body of soldiers having obtained admission upon some pretext, suddenly seized upon the gates and principal places, so that the inhabitants were unable to help themselves, and the town was in the power of the King’s officers. Joyeuse and Strozzi attempted the same thing at Montauban and Rochelle, but failed in consequence of information being sent to those places, which put the garrisons on their guard.†

The timely arrival of Resniers was the cause of Montauban being preserved. After his remarkable escape from the massacre he travelled southward, and arrived at that town with about eighty horsemen. He found the inhabitants in such a state of alarm that he could not persuade them to defend the place. On retiring from Montauban his little troop fell in with a division of Montluc’s army; they fought, less with any hope of success than from a desire to sell their lives as dearly as possible; their desperation was rewarded with a victory, for Montluc’s cavalry was nearly destroyed, and his standard fell into the hands of the protestants. Returning to Montauban with the news of this success, his example rekindled the courage of the people, and they shut their gates

a tooth-pick; and it became proverbial to say, “*Dieu me garde du euredent de Monsr. L’Amiral.*” See Brantome, vol. viii. p. 235.

* *Vie de Crillon*, written in 1785 by one of his descendants, Louis Abbé de Crillon, canon of Toulouse.

Davila, liv. 5. p. 628.

against the King's troops; many other places were then encouraged to do the same.*

By sacrificing the Admiral and his friends the King of France had completely destroyed every chance of employing the martial spirit of the nation, in a manner either useful or glorious; and he had rendered reconciliation with his revolted subjects absolutely impossible. Great exertions were requisite for raising his forces. Three armies were levied: one under La Chastre was employed to reduce Sancerre; Damville, with another, undertook to quiet Languedoc; the third, commanded by Villars, Admiral of France, was sent into Guyenne. Beside these, there were the forces under Strozzi before Rochelle, and Montluc's army near Montauban, ready to join that of Marshal Damville.†

Rochelle being the head-quarters of the Huguenots, it was considered that the conquest of it would be followed by the submission of the other towns, or at least the dispersion of the protestants, and the retreat or adhesion of their leaders. To make more sure of their object, Biron was proposed as their governor, he being high in the confidence of the protestant party, and reasonably so, as his destruction had been intended with theirs. Another reason for trying persuasion and gentle means, was the fear lest despair might make them deliver the place to the English. These proposals and delays gave sufficient time to prepare for the defence of the place, by repairing the works, as well as in sending abroad to negotiate for assistance.

Finding that Biron would not be received, and that after what had passed the protestants would

* Sully, liv. 1. D'Aubigné. vol. ii. p. 78.

† D'Aubigné.—*Hist. Univ.* Mezeray.—*Abregé. Chron.*

distrust any offer which might be made, Charles sent La Noue to Rochelle with full powers.* He was, happily for him, in Hainault at the time of the massacre, but finding himself too weak to oppose the Duke of Alva, he returned to France, and claimed the protection of his old friend the Duke of Longueville. His reputation stood so high with all parties, that his Huguenotism was forgotten in estimating his character; with the greatest share of bravery and military skill, he was known to be earnest in his wishes for peace; he was besides considered so incapable of dissimulation, that the highest importance was attached to his recommendations, by catholics as well as protestants. On his arrival at court, the King to his surprise received him with great demonstrations of kindness, and conferred upon him the confiscated property of Teligny, his brother-in-law. Charles then proposed to him to go to Rochelle to persuade the inhabitants to submit. La Noue declined such a commission; but the King's threats overcame his reluctance.† He was accompanied by a Florentine priest named Gadagni; and on approaching Rochelle he sent a message to the town to announce his arrival.‡

Biron was in constant communication with the leading Huguenots, and sent them information calculated to dispel any thoughts of submission,§ which, added to the exhortations of their ministers, not only made them decided in defending the town, but ren-

* De Thou, liv. 53.

† La promesse de M. de La Noue avoit été faite *lui ayant le couteau à la gorge.*”—*Mem. du duc de Bouillon*, p. 12. vol. xlvi of the Collection published in 1788.

‡ *Hist. Univ. D'Aubigné* vol. ii. p. 34.

§ *Davila*, liv. 5. p. 639.

dured them distrustful and suspicious of any offer which might be made.

In a village near the town, La Noue awaited the arrival of the deputies from Rochelle: their coolness was painful to a man so jealous of the esteem of his friends. "We have been invited," said they, "to confer with La Noue; but where is he? It is to little purpose that the person to whom we speak resembles him in person, when in character he differs so widely from him." La Noue pointing to the artificial arm he wore, (and which had procured for him the surname of *Bras de fer*), reminded them of the limb he had lost in their service: but they persisted in asserting, that they remembered with gratitude their valued friend, but that they could not then recognise him. Finding it impossible to treat with the deputies he requested permission to enter the town: the inhabitants received him joyfully, but they would hear no more of his proposals for a peace, and gave him a choice of three things; either to retire into England, to remain in the town as a private individual, or to become their general. In accepting the mission his conscience had reproached him with having joined the enemies of his religion; he had no hopes of persuading them to accept of peaceful terms; and after consulting with Gadagni, he consented to take the command of the town.* This step on his part did not, however, destroy the good opinion which Charles had entertained of him; and it is a case almost unparalleled, that being commissioned by two contending parties, he preserved the confidence of both. In action none more bravely joined in repelling the assailants; and at quiet in-

* De Thou, liv. 53. D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 34.

tervals he never omitted to exhort the town's-people to listen to the King's offers, which were liberty of conscience and full security for themselves; but they insisted on treating for all the protestants, which the King would not listen to.

It is remarked by Davila, that the court committed two errors in the manner in which they proceeded to reduce Rochelle: by losing so much time in parleys and negociations, the inhabitants had an opportunity of furnishing themselves with every necessary; and in supplying them with an excellent commander, (which they stood in need of) by sending La Noue.*

The town is naturally well fortified; and batteries and trenches had been added to its other defences. The garrison consisted of fifteen hundred regular troops, and about two thousand of the inhabitants, who though not well disciplined, were far from being inexperienced, having taken part in the preceding civil wars; the women also joined with ardour in the defence of the place, and emulated the animation of their husbands and brothers.

The besieging army was formidable; and the Duke of Anjou had the chief command. He was accompanied by the elite of the French nobility; the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé were also obliged to appear in the royal army, with a view to destroying more completely the hopes of the Huguenots. The siege began early in February, 1573. The Rochellese defended themselves in a manner which surprised their assailants. The principal direction of the royal army was entrusted to Biron and Strozzi; but Biron was not too desirous

* Davila, liv. 5. p. 640.

of seeing the Huguenot party subdued; and although the operations were on a grand scale, it is said that more might have been done if he had thought proper.* Another circumstance proved very favourable to the besieged; in the royal army there was neither system nor secrecy. The Duke of Anjou became disheartened, and summoned La Noue to quit the place. That general obeyed the order willingly; for in his endeavours to persuade the town to submit to the King, he had undergone many insults and mortifications from the more violent Huguenots; he asked for and obtained permission to retire to his own house, and live in private.†

The Rochellese could not but regret the loss of their brave leader, but no time was to be lost, and they chose five or six men of experience, who jointly exercised the command. Their hopes were kept up principally by the news that Montgomery was coming to their assistance. He arrived in April, but his vessels though numerous, were unfit for action; and the King's fleet and batteries compelled him to keep out at sea;‡ one ship, however, laden with ammunition and stores, succeeded in making the port, which proved of great assistance to the besieged.§ Charles complained to the Queen of England of this breach of the treaty existing between them, but De Retz, who was employed on the embassy, could only obtain a disavowal of her having equipped the fleet, which she said had been put to sea unknown to her.||

* Davila, liv. 5. p. 647. Brantome, vol. ix. p. 131.

† Davila, liv. 5. p. 645. D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 45.

‡ Brantome, vol. vii. p. 358. § Davila liv. 5. p. 648.

|| D'Aubigné vol. ii. p. 48.

In the meantime every thing languished in the royal camp: the Duke of Anjou had been wounded; Aumale and several others of rank killed; and above twenty thousand men had perished in the different attacks. The prince regretted that he had undertaken an affair, which seemed likely to destroy his reputation. The length of the siege, instead of weakening the Rochellese, seemed to impart both vigour and desperation, and a furious sortie, which they made in June, convinced him that his chance of success was very small. Twelve hundred men attacked the royal camp, while an equal number from the wall, opened a destructive fire upon the besiegers. The efforts of Crillon, one of the bravest men of the age, preserved the royal army from defeat, but he fell covered with wounds, and was thought to be dead; a violent struggle ensued for the possession of his body, which ended in the repulse of the Huguenots.* This circumstance proved clearly to the Duke of Anjou how capable the town was of prolonging the defence, and notwithstanding the arrival of six thousand Swiss to reinforce him, he decided upon taking the first opportunity to raise the siege.

The existence of a new confederation likewise contributed very much to help the Rochellese, by adding to the confusion and distraction which reigned in the Duke of Anjou's councils. They were called the *Politiques*, and embraced persons of both religions. Their aim was to destroy all foreign influence, and to effect some reformation in the state, without any consideration for religion. It had originated with the Montmorencies, Biron, and Cossé, previous to

* *Vie de Crillon, (by the Abbé Crillon,) p. 32.*

the massacre; the Duke of Alençon from his intimacy with Coligny had imbibed a taste for the reformed religion, and was easily persuaded to join them; Navarre and Condé would not be induced to make common cause with Alençon while they were under surveillance at court; but on finding themselves more free in the camp, their adhesion was soon brought about by the mediation of Turenne, a youth of great talents.* A plan was proposed for seizing upon Angoulême or St. Jean d'Angely; and they expected that upon their taking arms and declaring their reasons, they would be certainly joined by all the Huguenots. La Noue returned to the camp from Rochelle about the same time; and as there was some difference among the parties upon the plan of operations, they agreed to refer to his experience. He listened to all their reasons; and shewing them the certainty of their danger, the little probability of any advantageous result and the prospect of Anjou's departure for Poland, which would effect their purpose for them without having recourse to arms, he persuaded them to renounce it altogether.†

The news of this confederation reached the King, who became uneasy, lest some surprise should be attempted against himself; and he sent orders to his brother to hasten the reduction of Rochelle, as he required the troops near his own person. These orders were the cause of many ill-timed assaults being made, and with so little success. But while things

* Henry de la Tour d'Auvergne, Viscount Turenne, and afterwards Duke of Bouillon: his mother was a daughter of the Constable Montmorency, and his father was killed at the battle of St. Quentin.

† De Thou, liv. 56. Mem. du Duc de Bouillon, p. 24. Vie de Mornay, liv. 1, p. 25. Davila, liv. 5.

were in this position, the news arrived of Anjou's election to the crown of Poland ; and the Diet having insisted on some conditions in favour of the Huguenots, the opportunity was taken for putting an end to the conflict. During the siege the Rochellese had several times been offered liberty of conscience for themselves, but they declared they would never betray their cause by treating alone ; the King at last finding his treasury empty, and his army unable to subdue the town, sent orders for concluding peace on any terms ; and deputies from Nismes and Montauban were sent for to confer with those of Rochelle.

A treaty was concluded at the end of June, which secured to all protestants liberty of conscience, but freedom of worship was confined to Rochelle, Nismes, and Montauban. Great efforts were made to have Sancerre included in the treaty, but as that town was expected to surrender every day, they could not carry that point. The treaty stipulated also, that no one should be troubled for any promise of abjuration which had been extorted from him, and that all who had taken arms should be restored to their honours and fortunes, and be acknowledged faithful subjects. The treaty was ratified the sixth of July, and Biron entered the town as governor appointed by the King.*

La Chastre, governor of Berry, a violent catholic and zealous partisan of the Guises, had camped before Sancerre at the close of the year 1572 ; his attacks on the town were furious and incessant, but the resolution of the besieged seemed to increase with every

* Davila, liv. 5, vol. i. p. 653. De Thou, liv. 56, vol. vi. p. 665. D'Aubigné, vol. ii. pp. 98 et seq. this latter gives the treaty at length.

assault. At the end of three months he converted the siege into a blockade, and then the inhabitants exceeded even their former firmness. So long as they could procure the flesh of the vilest animals, they cheerfully made it their food; but having consumed every thing of that kind, they ate skins and parchments, and straw mixed with the most rancid grease; human flesh was their last resource, and even that was eaten by some people. The defence of Rochelle preserved them from desponding, and having great hopes of being included in any treaty which he made, they sustained their privations with firmness. The same circumstances in fact which obtained favourable terms for Rochelle, saved the lives of the remainder of the garrison; but the town was sentenced to pay a heavy fine, the municipal privileges were all cancelled, and the fortifications destroyed.* The siege altogether had lasted eight months.

The greatest magnificence was displayed in the reception of the Polish ambassadors; but Henry lingered in Paris, he felt a wish to stay, from a warm attachment to the Princess of Condé; and the Duke of Guise, while he hinted the possibility of an approaching vacancy on the French throne, gave him to understand that it was to his interest to remain in France. Charles, however, observing the delay in his departure shewed great displeasure; he had felt extreme satisfaction on hearing the decision of the Polish Diet; and Catherine, in a letter which has been preserved, informed the Duke of Anjou while before Rochelle, “ that she had never before seen his brother so pleased at his good fortune, and that it

* Davila, liv. 5, et D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 53. Mathieu, liv. 6

only remained for God in his grace to enable him to take Rochelle ;" but the delay made the King suspect some conspiracy against him ; he began to form plans of a very violent nature to counteract them ; and declared with an oath that one of them must leave the kingdom.* A longer stay became dangerous, and Catherine recommended her favourite son to depart. He left Paris the twenty-eighth of September, 1573.

Charles proposed to accompany his brother to the frontier, less from affection than to prevent his taking up quarters in some province. The King made a short stay at Villers-Cotterets, and while there he received a deputation of protestants, who presented a request embracing many points, upon which that party founded their complaints. Catherine was very indignant at the boldness of the demand, and said, " If Condé were still alive and at the head of twenty thousand horsemen, and fifty thousand infantry, and in possession of the principal towns of the kingdom, he would not ask for half what these wretches have the insolence to propose to us."† A sudden illness prevented the King from going beyond Vitry, where he remained while the Queen Mother proceeded to Blamont in Lorrain. She there took leave of the King of Poland in a most affecting manner, and her

* D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 106. De Thou, liv. 57. The Queen of Navarre in her Memoirs, p. 185, mentions that she informed her brother of a conspiracy, on his promising to take no vengeance on the parties implicated : it is not surprising then, that he should be irritated. Charles appears to have had a design of assembling the States-General, as the best method of quieting the country; for he appointed two gentlemen of each province to make a survey, and ascertain what was requisite.—See the Memoirs of William de Saulx, seigneur de Tavannes, at the beginning of the second book.

† De Thou, liv. 57, vol. vii. p. 17.

parting expression has caused suspicions of the too certain knowledge she had of Charles' approaching death: "Go my son," said she, "you will not be long there."*

The King of Poland quitted France in November, 1573. During the journey he stopped at Heidelberg, where the Elector Palatine omitted nothing which could remind him of the St. Bartholomew. In the apartment destined for him, was placed a large picture of the massacre, in which the Admiral and the principal persons murdered were represented in their natural size. The King was surrounded with French protestants who had escaped: they regarded him with a mournful air, and suffered him to hear some of their murmurs against himself, as a cause of their misfortunes. The Elector afterwards led him to the picture, and pointing to the portrait of Coligny, he said, "You know this man! you have killed in him the greatest captain in all Christendom. And you ought not to have done so, for he has done the King and yourself great services." Henry attempted an excuse upon the ground of the conspiracy, to which the Elector answered, "We know the whole history of that," and quitted the room.† This was not the only mortification of the kind which Henry experienced on his journey.

The Duke of Alençon aspired to filling the post of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, which became vacant on his brother's departure. Charles was willing to accede to his wish, but the Queen Mother considering it possible, that some means might be used to prevent the return of her favourite son,

* D'Aubigné et Mezeray.

† Brantôme, vol. viii. p. 216. De Thou, liv. 57.

whenever the King should die ; and knowing his turbulent disposition, rendered more dangerous from his inexperience, she aimed at removing him to some distance, and indulged him with the hopes of a marriage with the Queen of England, or of obtaining for him the government of Flanders : the vacant office was in the meantime conferred upon the Duke of Lorrain. Alençon's dissatisfaction revived the hopes of the Huguenots, who anticipated great results, if they could have the King's brother at their head : they offered to make him chief of their party ; persuading him that he might thus obtain even more power and consideration than had been refused him. Thus was renewed the project which had been abandoned at La Noue's recommendation ; and the Politiques or Malcontents reappeared as a party, with the addition of many persons of distinction.

The King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé were ready to join in any undertaking likely to put an end to their forced residence at court, which from the strictness with which they were watched, was a captivity ; Navarre besides had a great wish to visit his own dominions.† The leaders of the association held their conferences, sometimes at the residence of the Queen of Navarre, sometimes at that of Madame De Sauve :‡ both those ladies had such a reputation for intrigue, that the visits of the confederates excited no suspicion. But bad as were the morals of that corrupt court, the undisguised licentiousness of this coterie excited at last the King's severe displeasure.

* Davila, liv. 5. Mezeray.—*Abregé. Chron.*

† Perefixe.—*Hist. de Henri le Grand.*

‡ She was the wife of the Baron De Sauve : after his death, in 1579, she married the Marquis De Noirmoutier.

The Duke of Alençon had two favourites, who were of bold and scheming dispositions; and by whose counsels he had been excited to such measures. They were Joseph Boniface De la Mole, and Annibal, Count De Coonas, an Italian. The Queen of Navarre laid no restraint on her passion for La Mole, and the Duchess of Nemours, Guise's mother, placed her affections on Coonas: the King of Navarre and the Duke of Alençon disputed for the affection of Madame De Sauve, who was also addressed by the Duke of Guise. Charles IX. was indignant that his sister should so disgrace herself, and employed some persons to dispatch La Mole as he quitted the young Queen's apartment; but either being warned, or by chance, he staid there till morning, and thus escaped the snare.* Disputes frequently arose between Navarre and Alençon, and on one occasion it required the interposition of several gentlemen to prevent their fighting.†

The Queen of Navarre was the person who composed these differences; and in spite of the little reserve which was maintained, the enterprise of the confederates failed only from a misunderstanding respecting the day of its execution. Their ulterior intentions are unknown, at least there is so much uncertainty respecting them, that it is impossible to form an opinion upon the subject; but whether they contemplated any measure for excluding the King of Poland after his brother's death, or not, it is clear that at the moment, their object was only to withdraw all the confederated princes from the court, then staying at St. Germain's; and to conduct them

* *Journal de Henry III.* vol. i. p. 63.

† *Mathieu*, liv. 7, p. 409.

into some province, in which the protestants were numerous. An escort was all they required; and if the evasion was effected simultaneously with the arrival of their conductors, success would be certain. As a collateral measure, and to prevent immediate pursuit, by any considerable force, it was proposed to surprise a few surrounding towns at the same time.*

On Shrove Tuesday,† 1574, the court was surprised with the information that some armed bodies had been seen in every direction around the Chateaux; their arrival was not to have taken place for a fortnight, but the consternation of the Queen Mother gave the confederates every opportunity to effect their purpose at once. Alençon hesitated; and when his friends begged him to depart without loss of time, he replied, that he would not go, unless the town of Mantes were ready to receive him. Duplessis Mornay represented that his presence alone was sufficient to open the gates, and that without him they could not get possession of the town; the Duke of Alençon was inflexible.‡

Mornay unwilling to abandon the enterprise, went to Mantes, accompanied by his brother; they each of them seized a gate, and waited the arrival of Guitry, who commanded the escort, when they

* Le Laboureur in his additions to Castelnau, represents Navarre and Alençon as having planned the murder of Catherine de Medicis. But Bayle (Article Henry IV.) considers there is no foundation for such an hypothesis; and indeed, it is hardly probable that if Navarre had meditated such a thing, he would have chosen Alençon for a confederate.

† The 20th of February, is said to be the precise day by Ligues, in his Life of Duplessis Marnay, and Amyrault in that of La Noue.

‡ Vie De Duplessis Mornay, liv. 1. p. 26. Mem. du Duc de Bouillon, p. 40.

would be able to overpower the town. He happened to arrive too late, and Mornay and his brother escaped by a stratagem; they sallied from the town under pretence of attacking Guitry, and after some pretended manœuvres and pursuit, they all retired together. The King thanked him, by letters, for having saved the town from surprise; but he would not trust himself within reach of the King's resentment, which would be violent when the whole affair were laid open.*

La Mole in the meantime, perceiving that the enterprise had failed, thought to obtain the Queen's favour by giving a full account of the affair; he assured her that she need be under no apprehensions whatever, as the exclusive object was to release the princes from their captivity. Catherine would not trust to this representation, but gave immediate orders to set out for Paris. D'Aubigné has given us a description of the confusion which this sudden departure of the court produced: "The Cardinals of Bourbon, Lorrain, and Guise; Birague the Chancellor, Morvilliers, and Bellievre, were all mounted on Italian coursers, grasping the saddle-bows with both hands, and in as great fear of their horses as of their enemies."† The King, dangerously ill, was taken out of his bed in the middle of the night to be carried in a litter. His sufferings, both bodily and mental, and the mystery which still hung over the affair, made him suspect the worst, and his mind recalled the attempt upon Meaux: he said with a sigh, as he was moved into his litter, "at least they might have waited for my death!"‡

* Vie De Duplessis Mornay, p. 27. † Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 119.

‡ Brantome, vol. ix. p. 437.

The principal object of the confederates failed; but the plans of the Huguenots had led to events which were of serious consequence. They had resolved on taking arms in every part of France at the end of the carnival; the Rochellese had chosen La Noue for their general; and in the night of Shrove Tuesday he seized two towns by escalade. Other chiefs did the same in different provinces; and among them Montgomery, who was in Guernsey, waiting for a favourable opportunity; he took Carentan, Saint Lo, Domfront, and Valognes, and levied contributions on the surrounding country.* The Prince of Condé, Montmorency, Thoré, and Turenne escaped into Germany; the rest were imprisoned. Navarre and Alençon were confined in the castle of Vincennes; the Marshals Montmorency and Cossé were sent to the Bastille, to the great joy of the Parisians, who hooted and hissed them as they were conveyed thither,† the persons of inferior rank were held in custody to await the result of a judicial enquiry, which was proceeded with directly the court appeared secure from danger.‡

Catherine, alive to every suspicion, and fearing the worst consequences if her favourite son were prevented from enjoying his right of succession, was resolved on adopting some measure of severity to deter all parties from repeating these machinations; and at the same time she hoped to convert this attempt against her authority, into an occasion for strengthening it. The Viscount de Bourdeille, a courtier who appears to have enjoyed the confidence

* Brantome, vol. ix. p. 170. Davila, liv. 5.

† Davila, liv. 5, p. 665. Le Grain, liv. 2. p. 112.

‡ Commission pour instruire les proces, &c.—*Mem. de Nevers*, vol. i. p. 72.

of the King and his mother, wrote to the Duke of Alençon to caution him how he conducted his affairs. “ If,” says he, “ I had the honour of being with you for two hours, I would tell you things which you would find strange and maliciously invented; so that unless the King, the Queen Mother, and you do not take better care than hitherto, I fear I shall see you *aussi petits compagnons que moy.*”* From this it would appear that Bourdeille participated in the Queen’s fears of some deep plan of the *Politiques* respecting the government. When Catherine questioned the Duke of Alençon, he confessed every thing; and betrayed his friends, without stipulating for the least consideration in their favour.† The Queen wished the Chancellor to examine the King of Navarre; but he refused to submit to such a proceeding, which would compromise his dignity as an independent prince. However, to satisfy the Queen Mother that he was innocent of the charges she preferred, he made a declaration in her presence, in which he complained of many abuses; still he does not appear to have made any disclosure which might implicate any one.‡ Thoré indeed was so seriously involved by Alençon, that he would certainly have been put to death: Navarre met him in the palace, and told him to lose no time in making his escape.§ It was necessary to discover something on which to found a charge of high treason, for the evasion of the princes was an act which did not justify severity; several were put

* André, Viscount and Baron de Bourdeille, was the elder brother of Pierre de Bourdeille, Seigneur and Abbé de Brantôme. This and other letters are to be found in the 14th volume of his works.

† Mem. du Duc de Bouillon, p. 42.

‡ D’Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 121. Le Grain, liv. 2. p. 112. Mathieu, liv. 6. p. 374. De Thou, liv. 57.

§ Mem. du Duc de Bouillon, p. 42.

to the torture and made to confess things against Montmorency and Cossé. In searching La Mole's dwelling they found an image in wax, which was said to represent the King, whom they attempted to destroy by magic.* Upon these grounds La Mole and Coconas were beheaded ; a gentleman named Courtray, was also put to death ; and the Florentine, Cosmo Ruggieri, was sent to the galleys.† This man was famous, not only as an astrologer, but also as a maker of subtile poisons : the Queen Mother and several noblemen gave him great protection, and from that circumstance arose so much suspicion of persons of rank being poisoned at this time.

Charles IX. in the meantime was drawing to the close of his mortal career ; he exhibited a shocking spectacle of wretchedness, to serve as a warning to kings who may have an inclination for bigotry or cruelty. His bodily sufferings were rendered more violent by his dreadful remorse ; his blood is said to have started through all his pores ; and the St. Bartholomew being ever present to his imagination, he could not help expressing the regret which it caused him.‡ As his end approached he sent for the King of Navarre, whom he called his brother ; the Queen Mother, afraid lest it was to confer upon him the regency of the kingdom, wished to deter him from obeying the summons. As he proceeded to the King, who also was in the castle of Vincennes, she gave orders that he should pass through vaults, between a double line of guards ready to dispatch him. Navarre startled, retreated a few paces, and refused

* Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 73.

† This execution took place at the end of April, 1574. See Journal de Henry III.

‡ Mem. de Sully, liv. 1.

to go ; but the captain informed him there was no danger, and though he placed but little dependence on the declaration, he had to pass before the carbines and halberts.*

The dying King conversed with him for some time in a very friendly manner, and expressed sorrow at the severity with which he had been treated. “ I know,” said he, “ that you were not concerned in the late affair, though if I had paid attention to what was said, you would not now be alive ; but I have always loved you, and to your care I confide my wife and my daughter ; I recommend them to you.” The King then cautioned him to distrust ——. The name was not heard distinctly in the chamber, but the Queen Mother immediately said, “ Sir, you should not say that ! ” “ Why not,” replied the King, “ for it is true.” It is probable that the King of Poland was alluded to, for his vices were well known to Charles : some, however, think it was against the Queen Mother herself that the caution was directed.”†

Charles IX. died a few hours after, in the twenty-fifth year of his age, and the fourteenth of his reign.‡ The reason assigned for his death, by Ambrose Paré, his surgeon, was his passion for hunting, when he incessantly blew a horn. “ However,” says Brantome, “ it could not be driven out of some persons’ ideas, that he was poisoned when his brother set out for Poland ; and it was said, with the powder of some marine animal,§ which makes the party languish a long time, and then by degrees he dwindles away and becomes extinct like a candle. Those who have been suspected of being the authors of it have not

* Cayet, liv. 1. p 252.

† Ibid, ibidem. ‡ 30th May, 1574.

§ *Lievre marin* is the expression in the original.

come to a better end."* Marshal Bassompierre relates in his memoirs, that having cautioned Louis XIII. not to blow a horn too much, as it killed Charles IX., that King answered, " You mistake ; blowing the horn did not cause his death ; but he quarrelled with the Queen Catherine, his mother, at Monceaux, and left her and went to Meaux ; and if he had not yielded to the persuasions of Marshal De Retz, who conducted him back to Monceaux, to join the Queen, his mother, he would not have died so soon."†

De Thou, in allusion to the King's illness at Vitry, says, that few persons would believe the disorder was natural, and, in giving an account of his death, he mentions, " that to remove doubts the King's body was opened, but some livid spots which were discerned, and which could not be accounted for, only served to confirm the public in their suspicion."‡

In his person Charles IX. was of good stature, but without a pleasing physiognomy ; he took great pleasure in strong bodily exercise, and did not want courage. His character can best be learned from his history ; he possessed a good share of intellect, and was inclined to poetry. Had he been free from his mother's influence he might have made a much better king.

* Brantome, vol. ix. p. 440.

† Mem. de Mareschal de Bassompierre, vol. ii. p. 21.

‡ De Thou, liv. 57.

CHAP. XXXI.

CAPTURE AND EXECUTION OF MONTGOMERY;—FLIGHT OF HENRY III. FROM POLAND;—DEATH OF THE PRINCESS OF CONDÉ AND OF THE CARDINAL OF LORRAIN.

DURING the latter months of Charles's life, the Queen Mother had tried to have the regency settled upon her, in a manner that should prevent every kind of dispute. So long as the King retained his strength, he refused to give any thing more than letters to the governors of the provinces, desiring them to obey her in every thing during his illness; and in the event of his death, till the arrival of the King of Poland; but as his dissolution approached, he gave her the full powers she wished for, and a short time before he died he declared it in the presence of the princes and great officers of state.*

The condition of public affairs would have presented to any other person a most appalling aspect; but discord was Catherine's element, and it is even probable that she made the civil war with which France was threatened, a means of obtaining her wish. The Prince of Condé, on arriving at Strasbourg, had abjured the catholic religion and renewed his profession of protestantism. This event raised the hopes of the Huguenots, and they took arms every where as if the attempt on St. Germain had been successful. The death of Charles IX. became an additional motive with them, on account of their

* *Journal de Henry III.* Brantome, *vie de Charles IX.*

detestation of his successor; and there is reason to suppose that if the attempt had not been made too soon, if the confederates had remained quiet till after the King's death, they might have succeeded in placing the crown on Alençon's head. The taking of arms was so general, that in the southern provinces every private gentleman assisted in seizing on some strong place.*

Three armies had been levied to quell the insurrection: one under the Duke of Montpensier to oppose La Noue in Poitou; a second, under his son the Prince Dauphin, was sent to Dauphiny; and the third under Marshal Matignon was employed against Montgomery, who had made great progress in Normandy. As Marshal Damville already commanded in Dauphiny and Languedoc, the Queen wished to displace him, and persons were sent with orders to that effect, with private instructions to put him to death if possible.† The agents, however, could do nothing against Damville's address: he deceived the court by pretending to take no offence at his brother's confinement, and offered to lay aside his government and charge of Marshal, until the King should be pleased to restore them; but all the while he was increasing the strength of his partisans in different towns, and prevented any thing being effected in the quarter.‡

The Duke of Montpensier could do but little with his army; but Marshal Matignon was more successful. He marched direct to St. Lo, where

* Davila, liv. 5. p. 667.

† Brantome, vol. vii. p. 175. Davila, liv. 5. p. 670. Villeroy, in his Memoirs, labours hard to clear himself from this imputation.—*Memoires d'Etat*, vol. i. pp. 6 et seq.

‡ Davila, liv. 5. p. 671.

Montgomery was. The town is near the sea, on the mouth of a river which afforded the Count a haven for his ships. Matignon succeeded in completely investing the place, and a battery erected below the shipping entirely blockaded the town on that side. Montgomery being well acquainted with the neighbourhood, made his escape by night; crossed an arm of the sea in a fishing boat which lay on the shore, and retired to Domfront, another town held by his forces. His son remained at St. Lo, the Count promising to return in a few days, with some troops to help him. Directly Matignon was informed of Montgomery's escape, he followed him to Domfront, leaving sufficient force to mask St. Lo; the fortifications of Domfront being very feeble, the Marshal soon obtained possession of the town; but the castle was extremely strong.*

The court was delighted at the prospect of capturing the Count; but jealousy of Matignon, made Fervaques, an officer of distinction, wish to disappoint him. He was attached to the service of the King of Navarre who was naturally desirous that Montgomery should escape. Fervaques, accompanied by D'Aubigné, went to the besieging army, with the intention of conveying the Count safely out of the town, under pretence of examining the trenches. D'Aubigné approached one of the sentinels, and contrived to send a message to the Count, who met him at the same place the next night. D'Aubigné offered him the means of escape which Montgomery refused, as he expected assistance from Germany very speedily; a few days after he was obliged to surrender at discretion.†

* *Ibid.*, p. 675.

† D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 126.

The news of his capture reached Paris three days before the King's death, but he paid no attention to it. The Queen was surprised, and said to him ; "How ! my son, do you not rejoice at the capture of him who killed your father ?" He answered, that he took no further concern about that, or any thing else. This listlessness was considered a sure sign of his approaching end.*

Montgomery was the most obnoxious man of all the Huguenot party, but the death of Henry II. was purely accidental, and ought not to have been placed among the charges against him. He was an indefatigable leader, and his assistance and co-operation, had enabled Coligny to recover himself after the defeat at Montcontour ; he had besides been active and useful in missions to England to obtain reinforcements. So particularly was he doomed to destruction at the St. Bartholomew, that his escape was mentioned in the first dispatch sent off to communicate the news to the King of Spain.†

No time was lost in condemning him to the penalties of high treason ; he was beheaded at the Grève, his body quartered, and his family degraded from their nobility. Previous to his execution, he was cruelly tortured to make him confess the existence of the late Admiral's conspiracy, but the pain drew no such acknowledgment from him, and mangled and wounded as he was, he went to the scaffold with remarkable serenity.‡ We have an account given by a contemporary, of his steady attachment to his principles : "he would not confess to the Archbishop of Narbonne who went to him

* Brantôme, vol. xix. p. 443. Mathieu, liv. 6. p. 376.

† Brantôme, vol. 8. p. 188. ‡ D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 131.

in the chapel to admonish him; nor would he take or kiss the crucifix, which is usually presented to those who are being led to execution; nor in any way attend to the priest, who had been placed in the cart by his side. A Cordelier thinking to draw him out of error, began to speak to him, and said that he had been abused. Looking at him steadily, he answered, ‘How! abused? and if I have been it is by those of your order; for the first person who ever handed me a Bible in French, and made me read it, was a Cordelier like you; and therein I have learned the religion which I hold, which alone is the true religion, and in which, having since lived, I wish now, by the grace of God, to die in it.’*

Directly Charles IX. was dead, Catherine sent off a courier to Poland to communicate the intelligence to her son Henry; at the same time to be more secure in her authority, she removed the King of Navarre and the Duke of Alençon from Vincennes to the Louvre, where she placed them in apartments, the windows of which were grated; she also put so many persons to watch them, that escape was impossible.† But in order to render their captivity less irksome, she allowed them the society of her damsels without any restraint.‡ In addition to these precautions, the Queen had all the gates of the Louvre blocked up, with the exception of one, which was well guarded by Swiss; and the streets adjoining were barricadoed, for she was fearful of some attempt connected with the recent affair of Shrove Tuesday.§

* *Journal de Henry III.* vol. i. p. 4. He suffered 25th June, 1574.

† Brantôme, vol. i. p. 171. ‡ Mezeray.—*Abregé. Chron.*

§ *Journal de Henry III.* p. 2.

Catherine's precautions were not without reason ; for two proclamations were issued in the month of July, which foreboded great trouble for her. One was from Damville, who finding himself exposed to such danger from the Queen's machinations, had decided on joining the confederates ; the other was from the Prince of Condé, who announced that his German levies would be ready to march directly the protestants could find the means of paying them. An assembly was held in consequence at Milhaud, where it was decided that the Prince of Condé should be proclaimed their chief until they could be joined by the King of Navarre.*

The Queen Mother, uncertain of the nature of her son's policy, anxiously awaited his arrival ; but as it was desirable to have a strong force on foot in case he should wish to subdue his enemies by the sword, she sent Count Schomberg to raise six thousand Swiss, and some troops of German cavalry.† While in order to be nearer the frontier on Henry's arrival, she went to Lyons, taking with her the two captive princes, which, says Brantome, she did so cleverly, that no one would have thought they were prisoners who had seen them riding in her carriage with her.‡

The courier with the intelligence of Charles's death arrived at Cracow in the middle of June, and Henry immediately confirmed the regency to his mother. The French nobles who had followed him were pleased at the prospect of returning to their native land. The Poles were desirous of retaining him, and especially wished that he should preside at

* Davila, liv. 6. Mezeray.—*Abregé Chron.*

† Davila, liv. 6, p. 9. ‡ Vol. i. p. 71. *Vie de Catherine.*

a Diet about to be held on the frontiers of Lithuania. Henry had discussed the affair, and he thought it better to quit the kingdom immediately than to waste his time in formal consultations with the Polish senate ; his mother had informed him of the state of affairs in France, and that his presence was necessary ; and in order to prevent his plans being suspected, he acquiesced in the demands of the Poles at the moment he was taking measures for leaving them abruptly. Bellievre the French ambassador at his court, demanded his audience of leave, on the ground of his functions having ceased at the death of the prince who had commissioned him ; he set out for France immediately, and ordered relays on the road for the King and his suite. On the night of the eighteenth of June, 1574, this prince quitted his palace like a criminal fleeing from justice ; but all his care and arrangement barely preserved him from being arrested and conducted back to the Diet which he had so shamefully insulted. When his departure was known in the morning, Count Tanchin, the Grand Chamberlain, pursued him with five hundred horsemen ; but before he could overtake him Henry had reached the Imperial dominions.* The French who remained at Cracow were in danger of being sacrificed to the vengeance of the Poles ; the senate was in some measure appeased by the explanation given by Danzay, whom Henry had appointed to be his ambassador in Denmark ; he shewed the danger which pressed Henry's return to France, Condé having an army of Germans ready to join the Huguenots already in revolt. This excuse would have justified Henry in the eyes of posterity if his flight had not presented such inconsistency. He feared faction

* De Thôu, liv. 58. Mathieu, liv. 7.

in France ; he knew that more than one ambitious leader was ready to dispute the crown with him, and he felt conscious of having incurred the hatred of a large body in arms. But when he arrived at Vienna, Maximilian II. treated him with such distinction that he forgot the state of his affairs, and remained six days in the midst of pleasure and festivity.*

The emperor's two sons conducted him to the frontier, and wishing to avoid a renewal of the treatment he had experienced in passing through Germany, he took the route of Friuli and Venice ; he was received at the latter town in a most magnificent manner. He first alighted at Murano, a town famous for its manufactories of mirrors and crystals, where the display so enchanted his weak mind, that he ennobled all the manufacturers, " by which," says a modern writer,† " it is not to be understood that they became Patricians of Venice ; but that sort of nobility, which swarms throughout Italy and Germany. A grand procession of galleys of every kind were sent to conduct him from Murano to Venice. Henry threw his arms round the neck of Antonio Canale, who superintended it ; lavished the most flattering compliments upon him for his exploits at the battle of Lepanto, and knighted him. At a sitting of the grand council the King assisted in the costume of a Venetian Senator."

Henry made some stay at Venice ; but throughout his journey he was willing to stop wherever there were fêtes ; so much so, that instead of being actuated by love for France, his conduct seemed the result of dislike to Poland. He was sumptuously entertained

* Brantome, vol. iv. p. 75. Mezeray.—*Abregé. Chron.*

† Daru.—*Hist. de Venise*, liv. 28.

by the Dukes of Ferrara, Mantua, and Savoy, and entered his own dominions in the beginning of September, having occupied nearly three months in his journey.*

Catherine presented to him the King of Navarre and the Duke of Alençon, saying, “ I hand over to you these two prisoners, you have been informed of their conduct, and it is for you to decide on their fate.” Henry received them with a formal embrace, and listened to their excuses, when they made many protestations of their attachment to his person and government. He set them at liberty, recommended them to live united, and cautioned them against pernicious counsels which might be given them.† The princes received the sacrament with him, and swore fidelity and obedience.‡

Henry III. hesitated for a considerable time in deciding upon the policy he should adopt. Not only France, but the principal governments of Europe were in suspense, all being anxious to see whether the hero of Jarnac and Montcontour would quiet his kingdom by arms, or appease it by measures of a conciliatory nature. At Vienna the emperor had urged him to abstain from rigorous proceedings, and the Venetian senate had suggested the same thing; but his consciousness of being detested by the protestants for his conduct at the St. Bartholomew,

* The Duke of Savoy availed himself of the opportunity to obtain a written promise that Pignerol and some other places in Piedmont should be given up to him: this disgraceful cession of territory caused a spirited remonstrance from the Duke of Nevers and Marshal Bourdillon.—See *Mem. de Nevers*, vol. i. p. 1, et 68.

† Mathieu, liv. 7, p. 402.

‡ *Lui jurant par le Dieu qu'ils alloient recevoir, &c.—Journal de Henry III.*

made him resolve on a war for the purpose of exterminating them. He found three armies in the field, and had only to extend the scale of operations. Two of these, however, being commanded by princes of the house of Bourbon, the Queen Mother thought it might lead to a revival of the importance of that family, and Marshal Bellegarde was appointed to command in Dauphiny, in the place of the Prince Dauphin. Bellegarde immediately commenced the siege of Livron ; but without any prospect of success, for he was obliged to detach a part of his forces to oppose Montbrun, who ravaged Dauphiny uncontrollled.

Montbrun was a gentleman of Dauphiny, and one of the first who took arms at the time of the conspiracy of Amboise. Success in his different skirmishes had made him so insolent, that he actually seized the King's baggage as it passed from Savoy to Lyons. Being summoned in the King's name to release the prisoners he had taken, he answered with astonishing effrontery :—“ What ! the King writes to me as King, as if I must acknowledge him as such. I wish him to know, that it would be very well in time of peace, but in war, when folks are armed and in the saddle, every one is equal.” His good fortune at last deserted him ; a few months afterwards he attacked some troops of Gordes, the governor of the province, when he got so entangled in a position, between a mountain and a river, that his followers were completely routed, and himself wounded and taken prisoner : he was speedily executed by order of the parliament of Grenoble.*

* In February, 1575. Brantome, vol. x. p. 178, et Davila, liv. 6. p. 35. In his life written by Guy Allard, (p. 90,) it is mentioned

But embarrassed as the public affairs were at this period, Henry's disposition to gallantry prevented him from giving them his fixed and serious attention. Catherine encouraged this bias, which became so much security for the duration of her authority. Nothing could surpass the splendour of the court at Lyons; and it was a great misfortune for Henry to be so exposed at a time when his affairs required such different pursuits; his mind bent upon pleasure, here received the death blow to all its energy, and his accession to the throne of France became the epoch of so complete a change in his disposition, that the Duke of Anjou could no longer be recognised in him. Flatteries and seductions of every kind fanned into dreadful activity almost every bad quality, and his unbridled passions made him a slave to licentiousness, to the destruction of his character as a man and his dignity as a monarch.

Every attraction which female ingenuity could devise was put in practice at this time by the numerous beauties of the court, who aimed at the honour of being the King's mistress; but the charms of the Princess of Condé rendered their efforts unavailing; and though Henry's whole time was absorbed in gallantry and dalliance, he never formed any attachment. The Princess had been the idol of his heart before he left France; while in Poland, he wrote to her with his own blood to assure her of his affection: and when he returned he renewed his correspondence with her. At last finding her fixed on rejecting his suit, he proposed to marry her; a divorce he represented as easily effected on the ground of the

that the King sent him a pardon, but the messenger arrived too late; he had then been executed two hours.

Prince's heresy, and the circumstance of her having had no child by him. The letter which contained this proposal was intercepted by the Queen Mother, who took alarm at the idea of such a marriage, by which her influence would be inevitably destroyed. Her most ready method to prevent any result, was to write to the Prince of Condé, thinking that jealous of his honour and his wife's affection, he would speedily send for her to join him. But Condé had full confidence in the validity of his marriage, and in the virtue of the Princess, and took no measures for removing her from a court where it suited his interests to have her remain.*

Catherine then persuaded her son how necessary it was he should marry, to preserve the kingdom from the horrors of a contested succession: she recommended several princesses, beautiful and accomplished it is true, but not likely to excite him to act as a King, and to govern for himself, which the Princess of Condé would be sure to do. Henry appeared to assent to his mother's wish; and to deceive her more completely, he sent an embassy to Sweden to demand the hand of that king's sister; but Catherine was informed by her agents that he secretly took measures for effecting his object, and that he had arranged for speedily annulling the Prince's marriage, that he might espouse the Princess. This intelligence was closely followed by orders from the King, to prepare for his entry into Paris; but while the preparations for that entry occupied the attention of the court, the Princess of Condé died suddenly.† Henry's grief was extremely violent; he did

* Mathieu, Mezeray, et De Lussau, *Vie de Crillon*.

† *Vie de Crillon.* Mezeray.—*Abregé. Chron.*

not refuse to join in the general suspicion, that the death of the Princess of Condé was the effect of his mother's contrivance; at the same time, he entertained such a dread of her vindictive disposition, that he did not dare to reproach her with it. The condition of a country under such rulers cannot be too much deplored.

The court was soon after diverted from this subject by another demise, and Henry's grief was assuaged by the direction of his thoughts into a different channel: at the end of December the Cardinal of Lorrain expired after a short illness. The very prominent part he had taken in the government of France, during so many years, caused his decease to absorb every other idea for some days. The Queen Mother was relieved from the fears which his intriguing ambition had frequently caused her; but his talents and resources had, at times, been of inestimable value. The Cardinal had shewn great ability as a statesman; but unfortunately for his reputation, his ideas were framed on the doctrines of Machiavelli. As an ecclesiastic, he ranked high for his learning and eloquence, and he had a great reputation for piety; but, says Brantome, he was thought to avail himself of that for purposes of grandeur. The same writer states,* "that he had frequently heard the Cardinal discuss the confession of Augsburg, and preach upon it too, in order to win over the German princes more than for any other reason." In his temper he was haughty, and in his disposition vindictive; with respect to his conduct, if, as it has been said, he was a libertine, he had sufficient prudence to avoid public scandal in his pursuits. He was liberal

* Vol. viii. p. 149.

with his money, but his mind was too elevated for him to sink into common extravagance; and his chief expenditure was the employment of agents at every court in Europe, for obtaining early information of what was going on.* This made him formidable to his opponents, by his knowledge of their different manœuvres; while his thorough skill as a financier made him highly valuable to an administration.

CHAP. XXXII.

THE DUKE OF ALENCON ESCAPES FROM COURT TO JOIN THE MALCONTENTS;—DEFEAT OF THE REITRES AT DORMANS;—ESCAPE OF THE KING OF NAVARRE.

MARSHAL BELLEGARDE was still before the walls of Livron, the feeble garrison of which town defied his continued effort; the King thought that his presence would have some effect upon the exertions of the besieging army, and went to the camp accompanied by the Queen Mother and the whole court. His arrival was no sooner known to the garrison than the walls were crowded with men, women, and children, who said the most insulting things of him and his mother.† “Cowards!” they exclaimed, addressing the King’s followers: “Assassins! what are you come for? Do you think to surprise us in our beds, and to murder us, as you did the Admiral? Shew yourselves, young minions! come and prove to

* Vol. viii. p. 148.

† Mem. de Sully, liv. 1.

your cost, that you are unable to make head even against our women."* Their insolence was the more mortifying to the King, as the courageous resistance of the garrison had wasted his army considerably; and the remains were so dispirited that he ordered the siege to be raised, giving out as a pretext that he wanted the troops for his coronation.†

For that purpose he quitted Dauphiny in January, 1575. He was on the road to Rheims, when Fervaques approached him in the dress of a countryman, to give information of a plot against his life. He denounced the Duke of Alençon as the chief conspirator, and Henry was willing to believe the account upon the statement of Fervaques alone; but Catherine recommended an inquiry into the affair. Fervaques introduced a person, named by the Queen, to the assembled conspirators, as a confidant of Alençon's: relying on the honour of Fervaques, they threw off all reserve before the stranger, and convinced him that their intention was to kill the King, and place the Duke of Alençon on the throne. They were satisfied that nothing could be more easy; and they complained of the Duke, who had sent them no communications for a long time. The spy gave them some plausible reason, and returned to make his report.‡ It is unknown whether this conspiracy was altogether new, or merely a revival of that for which Lamole and others had suffered. The King immediately sent for his brother, and, in a menacing and angry manner, reproached him with the crime of which he said he had sufficient proofs, and for which he deserved death. Alençon confessed that the plan had been proposed to him, but that he had

* De Thou, liv. 60.

† Mezeray.—*Abregé. Chron.*

‡ Mathieu, liv. 7, p. 410.

never consented to be a party to it, and that he imagined it had been abandoned. The Queen's influence and persuasion brought the King to hush up the matter; but it left such an impression on his mind, that he was always ready to encourage suspicions against his brother. As none of the accomplices in this plot were punished, it was thought at the time that the whole affair was got up by the Queen Mother to answer some of her intricate purposes by alarming her son. The King himself confided his safety to the King of Navarre, who acted as captain of his body guards, and never quitted the door of his carriage.*

After various delays Henry arrived at Rheims, where he was crowned by the Cardinal of Guise:† there were present so few persons of distinction, that De Retz performed the duty of Constable;‡ the day following he married Louisa de Vandemont, daughter of the Duke of Morcoeur, and a relation of the Princes of Lorrain: a match which had been strongly recommended by the late Cardinal, and which very much increased the importance of his family.

The King returned to Paris towards the end of March, and in a short time received proposals of an accommodation with the confederates, who sent deputies for that purpose when they heard of his arrival. Their demands, which were thought unreasonable by the court, were supported by the influence of the ambassadors from England and the Swiss cantons. The King was unwilling to grant the terms they desired; and even had his feelings been that way inclined, the remonstrances of the

* Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. pp. 78-9 et Perefize. Hist. de Henry le Grand. -

† 15th Feb. 1575.

‡ Brantome, vol. vi. p. 10.

catholic party were so violent, that he would not have ventured to slight them. The deputies quitted the court, leaving one of their number to keep open a chance of some arrangement.*

Never was a court more curiously divided than that of Henry III. at this time. The Duke of Guise sought the friendship of the King of Navarre, and they lived in great harmony; but Guise discovered that he was deceived, and a mortal hatred arose between them.† Guise considered that while Navarre lived he could never be safe; while he was well aware that Guise would never allow him the privileges to which he was entitled as first prince of the blood. The Queen Mother, who had formerly been so partial to the King of Navarre, now entertained an equal dislike to him, and went so far as to ask her daughter Margaret if he had any defect, for in that case a divorce should be obtained.‡ The Queen's hatred arose from an astrologer having predicted that he would be King of France. Her hopes had long dwelt upon another prediction, that her four sons should be kings, and she had made great endeavours to realise the idea. When Henry returned from Poland, she endeavoured to place his brother on that throne, but the diet had resolved on the election of another.§ Alençon's ambition had therefore to fix upon a fresh object.

Navarre possessed the King's confidence and esteem; but Alençon was suspected on account of the numerous intrigues he had been concerned in:

* Davila, liv. vi. p. 38.

† Mem. de la vie de J. A. de Thou, liv. 3.

‡ Mem. de la Reine Marguerite, p. 183.

§ Davila, liv. vi. p. 40. The Diet chose Stephen Battori, a native of Hungary.

that Prince was also despised by the whole court for his known bad qualities. His position in the state alone preserved his importance, and the valour of his friend and confidant Bussy d'Amboise, protected him from many insults intended for him at the instigation of the King, who could no longer endure his presence, and was resolved to have him dispatched.

Soon after the King was dangerously ill, and the disorder principally affected his ear. He called to mind the prevailing opinion upon the death of Francis II., and considered himself poisoned by his brother's contrivance; he sent immediately for the King of Navarre, whom he informed of his suspicions, declaring that he should regret leaving his crown to such a detestable successor, and ordered him to dispatch the Duke. The King's favourites longed for an opportunity of punishing a prince they so much detested, and prepared to assist the King of Navarre, who attempted to calm the King's mind by shewing him the dreadful consequences of such an event. Henry became more enraged, and ordered it to be done directly, for fear it should not take place when he was dead. The King of Navarre at last persuaded him to ascertain that he was really poisoned before he took such violent measures, and observed, that it was to his interest, his honour, and his fame, to protect the life of the Duke, as he would be open to much suspicion if any such thing occurred, on account of his then becoming first prince of the blood and heir to the crown.*

Henry's recovery convinced him how wrongfully he had suspected his brother; and it was to have

* Mathieu, Perefixe, P. Daniel, et Mem. de Nevers.

been expected that his angry feelings towards him would have given place to fraternal affection as the proper recompense for his ill-treatment. The King's hatred, however, appeared to increase, he took every opportunity of shewing his contempt, by encouraging his minions to insult the Duke. It was at his suggestion that a plan was laid for murdering Bussy d'Amboise, the Duke's favourite. As he was leaving the Louvre one evening, that person was attacked by a number of armed men who fired at him several times; by a wonderful chance he escaped. It was generally believed that persons were sent to inform the Duke of Alençon that Bussy was being murdered, and that if he had gone to help him he was to have been killed also; this affair made a great noise at the court.*

Another circumstance occurred about the same time, which shews that Henry would consent to any atrocity, in order to be freed from those whom he disliked. Marshal Montmorency, who had remained in confinement ever since the attempt on St. Germain's, had been preserved from destruction by the influence of his wife, of whom the King was tenderly fond;† added to a dread of his brother's resentment, if any harm should befall him. As there appeared no chance of bringing him to trial, notwithstanding the complete proofs they had of his complicity in the late affair, those who had contributed to the severity of his confinement felt apprehensive that whenever he

* Mem. de la Reine Marguerite, p. 211, et Perefixe, liv. 1.

† Madame de Montmorency was a natural daughter of Henry II. she was subsequently known as Diana, Duchess d'Angoulême. She went to Lyons in mourning on the King's arrival to intercede for her husband.—See *De Thou*, liv. 59, et *Brantôme, vie de Marshal M.*

obtained his liberty, he would surely take some sort of revenge; their object in consequence was to destroy him. A report was circulated that Marshal Damville was dead; all fear ceasing from that quarter, the King was easily persuaded to give orders for strangling Montmorency and Cossé in prison.* Their lives were spared by the postponements contrived by Gilles de Souvré, who was intrusted with the dreadful commission. The King had promised to make him governor of Vincennes, as a recompense; but either from attachment to Montmorency, or from pure motives of humanity, he caused repeated delays, and allowed time for the arrival of a courier with the news of Damville's recovery; the plan was then abandoned altogether. Some poison had recently been given to Marshal Damville, but good remedies applied with promptitude preserved his life; the King, however, received information that it had killed him, a fair ground for supposing his knowledge of its being administered.†

The friends of the captive marshals took the only revenge in their power, which was, to stir up the discontented feelings of the Duke of Alençon, and thus increase the importance of the party. That prince was very indignant at being refused the post of Lieutenant-general; and besides, considered the recent attack upon Bussy, as a personal injury; he resolved to quit the court. His fondness for Madame de Sauve prevented him from keeping secret his intentions, and the King being informed of them, he found it difficult to execute his purpose. He succeeded by going one evening to the faubourg St.

* Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 81.

† Brantôme, vol. vii. p. 175. De Thou, liv. 61. Mathieu et Mezeray.

Marcel, to visit a lady who was known to receive great attention from him; and while his gentlemen waited for him in the street, he slipped out by a private door, and immediately proceeded to the rendezvous of his confidential friends. Horses were ready, and without any loss of time they set out for Dreux, where he arrived before morning.* The next day he published a manifest, explaining his reasons for quitting Paris. He enlarged on the improper manner in which he and many noblemen had been held in unmerited confinement; he complained of the advisers about the King, who would effect the complete ruin of the kingdom, and demanded the calling of the states-general for putting an end to different abuses, and the assembling of a general council for religious affairs. This proclamation was chiefly distributed in those parts where the Huguenots were numerous, from which it would appear that the prince placed his hopes of support on that party.†

Alençon's escape was known at court a few hours afterwards, and the Duke of Nevers was sent in pursuit of him; but he was too far a-head to be overtaken. Henry's anger was kindled against his brother; he paced his room up and down, and gave vent to his passion in the most violent threats; he ordered every one to take horse immediately and bring back the Duke dead or alive. Several of the courtiers pretended to obey the order, but others observed, "that they would devote their lives for the King in any way; but to go against Monsieur, his brother, they

* 15th September, 1575. Davila, liv. 6, p. 42. 16th according to De Thou, liv. 61.

† Davila, liv. 6, p. 43. D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 177. Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 97.

were sure would bring his displeasure upon them at a future time."* A council was held the next day to consider what measures ought to be adopted. The Queen Mother was of opinion that the affair should be accommodated on any terms whatever; as no price was too great for detaching the prince from the malcontents. The King took the same view of the subject, and the two marshals were released from prison on the sole condition of contributing their aid in bringing about a reconciliation.† Circular letters were also addressed to all the princes of various houses of France, calling for their co-operation.‡

The Duke of Alençon was soon surrounded with a number of persons of rank; Turenne and La Noue were among the first who joined him. The Prince of Condé was advancing to meet him with his foreign levies; he, knowing Alençon's ambitious disposition, and considering the importance of his name, as brother of the King, would not dispute the precedence; and being sure that he possessed the confidence of the Huguenots and foreigners, he proclaimed Alençon commander-in-chief, satisfied with the real exercise of the authority, while he resigned the name of it. He made one stipulation, that no peace should be concluded without his consent, and which did not

* Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 83. † Davila, liv. 6, p. 44.

‡ A copy of this letter is inserted at length in the Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 92; but it is dated 6th September, and speaks of the Duke's flight as having taken place the day before: if the 16th be meant, it agrees with Davila; but if we take into account the alteration of the calendar (which occurred ten years after this event), we must add eleven days, which makes it the seventeenth; thereby confirming the date given by De Thou; a circumstance the more probable as there is another instruction to governors, &c. on the same subject dated the 10th.

secure for him the government of Metz, Toul, and Verdun.*

Thoré, a younger brother of the Marshals Montmorency and Damville, had contributed a large sum towards the equipment of the foreign troops ; and was appointed to command a division, which was to precede the main body under Condé, consisting of more than twenty-five thousand men. Thoré considered the confederates were in need of help, and proposed traversing Champagne to join them some time before the Prince of Condé could come up.†

The Queen Mother had heard of the approach of this army, and directly she knew of Alençon's flight, she wrote to Thoré, saying, “ that if he advanced, she would send him the heads of his brother and Marshal Cossé.” He sent back word in reply, “ that if she did as she threatened, there was not a spot in France where he would not leave traces of his vengeance.”‡ He continued his march, and the Queen, instead of displaying her angry feelings, set out to exert her persuasive talents in an interview with her son.

Meanwhile Thoré was passing through Champagne and trying to avoid an action with Guise, who was pursuing him ; he was overtaken at Dormans, and compelled to oppose his men, fatigued with long and continued marchings, to the fresh troops of the Dukes of Guise and Mayenne. The action was severe, and the loss on both sides was great : Thoré's troops were completely routed, and the cavalry were destroyed ; the infantry, however, succeeded in effecting a very good retreat.§ It was in this action that Guise re-

* Davila et Mezeray. † Davila, liv. 6. p. 45.

‡ Mathieu, liv. 7. p. 423. ¶

§ Davila, liv. 6. p. 47. Mem. de Bouillon, p. 137.

ceived the wound in his face which obtained for him the surname of the Balafré.

Alençon had proceeded to Berry; Nevers would have prevented his passing the Loire, but Catherine sent him an order signed by herself which stopped his pursuit. She feared lest any bodily harm should befall her son. She followed him from town to town, accompanied by the two marshals, through whose assistance she hoped to succeed in her projected negociation. She did not fail to take with her a numerous train of damsels, upon whose co-operating influence she placed great expectations. At last, in the month of November, she overtook the Duke at Champigny in Poitou, when a truce for six months was agreed to. Catherine returned to Paris quite satisfied with her success; as before the expiration of the term, she might calculate upon the dispersion of the German troops; and from what she knew of her son's disposition, she anticipated his consent to much more favourable terms.*

For a long time no person of consequence of the Huguenot party had been allowed to approach the King of Navarre; he was watched and guarded by bigoted catholics, the greater part of whom had distinguished themselves at the massacre. He was besides surrounded with spies of both sexes, and of every rank, whose exclusive object was to prevent his escaping to join the Duke of Alençon. But that was not his intention; he had too indifferent an opinion of that prince to make common cause with him: and it had been Catherine's policy to keep alive a misunderstanding between them. She had soothed Navarre with the hopes of being Lieutenant-general;

* Davila, liv. 6. p. 48.

and as his competitor had left the court in so offensive a manner, he made sure of the appointment. But the ladies De Sauve and Carnavalet, who were rather attached to him, put an end to his delusion, by shewing him that if Alençon would return, the post would be made at once the price of a reconciliation.

Three faithful attendants however were with the King of Navarre—D'Aubigné, Armagnac, and Jonquieres, who endeavoured to rouse their master to activity. Wearied with their repeated efforts, which were rendered ineffectual by the seductive pleasures with which Catherine had surrounded him, they were on the point of quitting his service, in order to join the Huguenots; but one night they overheard him lament the absence of faithful friends, as he repeated a verse in the Psalms. D'Aubigné took the opportunity of addressing his master in a firm and serious, but respectful manner; “ You sigh, Sire, on account of the distance of your faithful friends, while they are lamenting your absence, and are endeavouring to procure your liberty. But you have only tears in your eyes, while they have arms in their hands; they fight the very enemies that you are serving.” He roused his feelings by shewing that his proper place was filled by Alençon; and concluded with the assurance that so far from there being any probability of his having the post of Lieutenant-general, the promise of it had become a public jest at court. The effect of this address was strengthened by the Queen of Navarre, who reported some violent expressions which the King her brother had made use of respecting him; and her physician informed him, that he had been ordered to poison him.*

* D'Aubigné, vol. ii. pp. 183. et seq.

It was at last decided, after repeated consultations, that the King of Navarre should leave the court in February, 1576; and that Mans, Chartres, and Cherbourg should be seized by persons of his confidence. The different parties took a solemn oath, that nothing should make them relinquish the enterprise, and vowing eternal enmity to him who should betray them. To facilitate their purpose, the King of Navarre was to appear confident of soon obtaining the Lieutenancy of the kingdom, and to have his liberty of hunting extended to a greater distance. To effect this he went into Guise's chamber before he was up, and got into the bed to him, for more confidential conversation. He talked of his approaching preferment, and so completely deceived the Duke, that he went immediately after he was dressed to divert the King with Navarre's credulity. This morning visit proved extremely useful, for the court had resolved to deprive him of the liberty of hunting at a distance; but thinking him so willing a captive in consequence of his expectations, they made no infringement on his liberty.*

The King of Navarre went to hunt near Senlis, without any idea of putting the plan into execution so soon; but a circumstance had occurred which rendered decision necessary. Fervaques had on a former occasion preserved the King's person, by informing him of a plot on the road to Rheims; the merit of this action was destroyed, by his afterwards confessing that he thought such a service would have secured his being made a Marshal of France. A similar feeling induced him on this occasion to betray the King of Navarre and his friends. D'Aubigné

* Ibid. p. 187.

observed the King and Fervaques whispering together, and suspecting the nature of their conversation, he retired without being seen. He staid near the gate of the palace, and when he perceived Fervaques coming out, he suddenly laid hold of him, saying, "Wretch! what have you been doing?" The traitor, taken unawares, confessed that his obligations to the King had made him betray Navarre; and added, "go and save your master."

D'Aubigné went immediately to Navarre's stables, and succeeded in getting out of the town with the horses and equerries just before the gates were shut by the King's orders. They were met near Senlis by the King of Navarre, on his return from the chase, who inquired the reason of his horses being there. D'Aubigné informed him of the treachery of Fervaques, and recommended him to retire to Sedan or Alençon. The King of Navarre was quite decided, but he had two spies about him, and to be freed from them required address. He called one and sent him to court with a message stating, that a report having circulated to his prejudice, that he was about to join the malcontents, he wished to know whether it was his majesty's pleasure for him to continue hunting, or to go to court to clear himself. He dismissed the other on a pretence of having forgotten that the King was to go into the country, and sent him to meet his majesty in another direction. The King of Navarre then set out with a few gentlemen on whom he thought he could rely, passed the Seine at Poissy, and reached Alençon the following day.*

* D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 188. Mem. de Sully, liv. 1. Mathieu, liv. 7.

Soon after his arrival at Alençon he was joined by about two hundred and fifty gentlemen; and among others by Fervaques, who found it safer to trust to the Prince he had betrayed and injured, than to him whom he intended to have served; especially as Henry III. was extremely angry with him, and appears to have appreciated his real motives; he swore that he would have him hanged, and that if any one informed the traitor, his life should answer for it. Crillon, a gentleman renowned for his bravery, ventured to caution his friend, who immediately set off for Alençon to join the King of Navarre. The flight of Fervaques was known in the morning, and Henry in a rage turned over in his thoughts the names of those who heard him resolve on punishing him. Crillon entered at the moment, and the King with fury in his countenance thus addressed him: "Fervaques has escaped from my vengeance, and leaves me only the hope of exercising it signally on him who has placed him beyond my reach: do you know who it is?" "Yes, Sire!" said Crillon. "Well then," answered the King with vehemence, "name him." Crillon acknowledged that he was the guilty person, and Henry was so struck with his candour and firmness, that he pardoned him, observing that as there was only one Crillon in the world, his clemency towards him could not be brought into precedent.*

When Fervaques came to the King of Navarre, D'Aubigné accused him of treachery; he pleaded as his defence, that Madame Carnavalet had previously informed Henry of the whole affair, and that she had entreated him to confirm her account; which he did,

* *Vie de Crillon*, vol. i. p. 249. D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 189.

thinking that as it was known, his declaration was of no consequence. Navarre accepted his excuse either from attachment to him, or through a consciousness of his own weakness, whenever his principles and his passions were in contact.

From Alençon the King of Navarre went to Tours, where he renounced popery, and protested against his abjuration in 1572, as compulsory.* This step increased the boldness of the Huguenots, and their troops in different parts amounted to fifty thousand men. But so formidable a force accomplished nothing, for the Queen made use of her proposals and intrigues; and the Duke of Alençon finding his consideration eclipsed, became less zealous in the cause. A meeting of the confederate chiefs was held at Moulins, early in March, where they drew up the terms which they required, but which were such as the government was not likely to accede to. The Huguenots claimed a portion of the tithes for the support of their ministers: Alençon demanded an extension of his appanage to a degree which would have made him an independent prince; Condé desired the government of Picardy, with the absolute possession of Boulogne; and Navarre claimed the government of Guyenne, the free sovereignty of his paternal dominions, the payment of the pensions formerly allowed to his family, and the dowry of his wife. These demands, if granted, would have been the ruin of the monarchy, and they were therefore rejected.†

The King of Navarre made a sudden journey into Guyenne and Bearn; and as the people of those pro-

* Mem. de Sully, liv. 1. Cayet, liv. 1.

† Davila, liv. 6. p. 58.

vinces were uncertain whether he was acting for or against the King, he was able to get possession of several important places; besides which, he was immediately joined by the ancient adherents of his family. This alarmed the court, and Catherine went again to the camp to see what she could do with her son. Alençon was easily persuaded to renounce his connection with the Huguenots, and finding that his influence was reduced to nothing, by the importance of Navarre and Condé, (one of whom had the full confidence of the Huguenots, and the other of the Germans,) he was ready to consent to a peace on easy terms. A treaty was concluded, the terms of which were more favourable to the protestants than those of any one preceding, although the demands made by the meeting at Moulins were considerably modified. The protestants were allowed the free exercise of their religion, with a number of towns; and the attainders of Coligny, Briquemaut, Montgomery, La Mole, and others were reversed: while for the security of the Huguenots in the administration of justice, mixed commissions were established, composed of persons of both religions. The edict contained sixty-three articles, one of which (the thirty-second) is remarkable, as it declares that "the disorders and excesses committed the 24th of August and following days, at Paris, and in other towns and places of our kingdom, have occurred to our very great regret and displeasure."

*. The edict dated May, 1576, is given at length in the Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. pp. 117, et seq.

CHAP. XXXIII.

RISE OF THE LEAGUE;—ESTATES OF BLOIS;—WAR OF 1576.

THE treaty which concluded the fifth civil war, was attended with but little benefit, and produced an armistice, rather than a peace. The protestants had obtained such favourable terms, that they could object to none of its conditions ; but every one entertained doubts of their being carried into execution. They knew from experience, that Catherine was never so lavish of her concessions as when she was planning some great deception ; and it is astonishing, that with so much knowledge of her perfidy, they could ever listen to any proposals, while she was at the head of the government.

The King of Navarre retired to Rochelle, where he was received with great distinction ; the inhabitants however would not allow him to be accompanied by all his officers and gentlemen. They objected in particular to La Valette, afterwards Duke of Epernon, and to every one who had been concerned in the Saint Bartholomew.*

It soon became evident that the edict of pacification would not be executed ; and it seemed generally understood, that the promises had been exclusively for drawing the king's brother from the confederates. The articles in his favour were fulfilled, but no others.† He assumed the title of Duke of Anjou,

* Sully, liv. 1. Perefixe, liv. 1.

† Davila, liv. 6. p. 62.

and entered on the enjoyment of an increased appanage ; but the Queen very soon convinced Navarre, that he need not look for the full execution of the treaty : she even denied having promised anything to the Huguenots, who perceived that they must before long resume their arms.*

The catholic party expressed great indignation at the favourable conditions granted to the Huguenots ; and the principal object of the court being effected, the King took measures for stopping such complaints, by encouraging the attempts made to prevent the meetings of the protestants, and by delaying, on a number of frivolous pretences, the establishment of the *Chambres mi-parties, or mixed commissions* : and when at last a nomination took place, the parliament of Paris being aware of the King's feelings, refused to admit the new counsellor.†

The Prince of Condé was the first who expressed his dissatisfaction ; his government of Picardy was withheld, and he found that he should derive none of the advantages which he had expected from the treaty. He wrote in consequence to Prince Casimir, requesting him to remain near the borders of Lorrain, with the Reitres under his command, until the peace was firmly established.‡ This step on his part was soon justified by the behaviour of the catholics, who were not only disgusted with the treaty itself, but were indignant at the steadiness which the protestants displayed in their resolution to maintain it. They called upon the King to revoke the edict, and altogether exterminate the heretics ; the association formed

* Sully, liv. 1. p. 67. † Davila, liv. 6. p. 62.

‡ *Hist. des derniers troubles*, vol. i. p. 6.

for expressing this general feeling produced the *league*.

During the sittings of the Council of Trent, the Cardinal of Lorrain had projected a similar thing, and many suppose that this was no more than the development of his plan. He had proposed that his brother should be the chief; and the measure met with the unanimous approbation of the council. But the news of Guise's death arrived about the same time, and the Cardinal's penetration satisfied him, how dangerous it would be for his family to see that important post filled by any but a prince of that house; the design was therefore abandoned for a time.*

The idea was renewed in 1567, when an attempt was made to establish a society for the defence of religion and the state, under the name of the *Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit*!† The King ordered Tavannes to enrol all good catholics, and report their numbers to him; but the war which soon after broke out, appears to have put an end to it, for the association is not subsequently mentioned in the accounts (public or private) of the affairs of France.

The endeavours of the government to suppress the public exercise of the reformed religion, rendered such associations unnecessary, till the peace of 1573 gave proof that the Huguenots' strength increased with their persecutions; and that the St. Bartholomew had only served to widen the breach, and kindle a greater spirit of resistance among them. Added to which, the party of the *Malcontents* or *Politiques* had obtained for them the support of many catholics, and

* Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. i. p. 20.

† See vol. i.

there was a great prospect of those persons ultimately adopting the religious as well as the political views of the Huguenots. The Cardinal of Lorrain again exerted himself to establish a league, as the only barrier against the alarming innovation : he died soon after, and another postponement took place.

When the peace was concluded in 1576, two circumstances were particularly favourable for its formation : the Duke of Guise was able to take his father's place, and the kingly authority had been so much disparaged by Henry's behaviour, that in the organization of such an union, there was no fear of control from the court ; full scope was therefore afforded for the ambition of the Lorrain princes ; who aiming at first to no more than the chief share in the administration of affairs, were ultimately tempted to aspire to the throne itself.

Ever since his return from Poland, the King had indulged in the most ridiculous practices of Romish devotion. The journal of his reign mentions a number of his achievements of this description. In October, 1575, he ordered a general and solemn procession, in which he had the relics of the holy chapel carried ; he followed the whole of the way, telling his beads with great devotion. The *true cross* had been stolen from the chapel of the palace, which caused a great sensation among the catholics. Henry contrived to supply the loss, and ordered a public notice in all the churches, that he had caused a new crucifix to be made, in which was inserted a *large piece of the real cross*, and that the people were to go to adore it during the holy week of 1576.*

In the month of August, the King went on foot

* Journal de Henry III. vol. i. pp. 11 et 13.

through the streets of Paris, to gain the benefits of the jubilee, published by Gregory XIII. ; he was accompanied only by two or three persons, and held a large rosary in his hands, muttering *Paternosters* as he walked along. The Queen Mother had recommended him to do so, with a view of shewing his attachment to the catholic religion : but it failed of its effect ; and the people losing all respect for his person, made upon him the most insulting lampoons, parodied his titles, and turned into derision his encouragements of the religious orders.*

The King's ill-judged behaviour convinced all thinking catholics that his protection was of no use to their religion ; against such a leader the Huguenots would be sure to succeed ; they were induced, in consequence, to adopt the views of the league from principle. Some mingled other considerations with their religion, and thought the national welfare would be better secured if intrusted to the Duke of Guise, than to their imbecile and enervated monarch, who knowing that a treaty had put an end to the war, gave himself no further trouble about public affairs. He was surrounded by a number of young nobles of no reputation, whom he loaded with favours, and kept constantly in his company. The principal among them were, Quelus, Maugiron, St. Megrin, Joyeuse, and La Valette ; they had been chiefly introduced by Villequier, a man of detestable character. Their effeminate practices procured them the epithet of the King's minions ; and their scandalous intimacy with the monarch gave rise to imputations, which certainly were justified by Henry's

* *Journal de Henry III.* vol. i. p. 15.

general conduct.* "His manners," says Voltaire, † "were those of a coquette ; he wore gloves made of a peculiar kind of skin, in which he slept, to preserve the beauty of his hands, which in fact he had finer than any lady of his court ; ‡ he put on his face a cosmetic paste, and wore a sort of mask over it." His conduct had completely obliterated the memory of his previous renown, and with the proper qualifications of a king, and good opportunities for displaying them, he became the burden of the state which his arms had formerly sustained, while he scandalized the religion for which he had so much exerted himself.

Guise had at one time possessed a great share of Henry's friendship. The minions had succeeded in excluding him from the King's confidence, and then insulted him openly ; a desire to resent such treatment made him the more ready to avail himself of so favourable a combination of circumstances. The nation was weary of being a prey to the minions ; the princes of the blood were all suspected through their connexion with the Huguenots ; the King was universally despised, and himself as generally beloved ; he had moreover the powerful influence of Spain and Rome to support him, and a host of staunch and persevering adherents in the persons of the catholic clergy.

A form was drawn up, and circulated secretly by his emissaries, it was presented to catholics of known zeal, who signed it, and took a corresponding oath.

* He was very fond of masquerades, where he was usually dressed in female apparel.—*Journal de Henry III.* p. 17.

† In a note to the *Henriade*.

‡ Brantome after praising the elegance of Catherine's hand, adds, " the King, her son, Henry III., inherited a great deal of that beauty."—Vol. i. p. 49.

The form declared the different objects of the association, which were the restoration of the Roman catholic church, the preservation of the King's authority conformable to the conditions which might be set forth at a meeting of the states-general, and the restoration of ancient liberties. The parties mutually bound themselves to devote their lives to enforce the above declarations; to take vengeance on any who should molest one of their number, as well on him, who having once joined them should desire to separate from the association; ready obedience was also promised to the chief who might be chosen.*

At first there were but few persons of respectability who would sign the league; they wanted to know who was to be chief before they engaged themselves. The activity of the magistracy also presented great obstacles, which might have proved fatal to the association if Guise had not been assisted by Jacques de Humieres, governor of Peronne, who was not only attached to the house of Lorrain, but was also personally interested in the revocation of the treaty of peace, for that stated among other articles, that Peronne was to be surrendered to the Prince of Condé. His interests being so deeply concerned he published a manifest, justifying the nobles and gentlemen of Peronne in refusing to receive the Prince, and declaring that it was known for a certainty that he had resolved on abolishing the catholic religion, and setting up Calvinism throughout Picardy.†

* This declaration is so well known, and is given by so many writers, that I have considered its insertion at length unnecessary.

† Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. i. p. 38. Vie de Mornay, p. 35.

The King received early information of great importance, which if properly attended to by him might have saved France many years of civil war. A lawyer named David, had either taken upon himself, or was employed by Guise to go to Rome and lay before the pope and cardinals the plan of the league.* He died on his journey, in what manner is unknown; but on examining his portmanteau was found a parcel of papers which described the object of this association. The principal document commenced by declaring that the papal benediction, especially that of Stephen II. which was given to the race of Charlemagne, did not extend to the family of Hugh Capet, usurper of the crown; and the Princes of Lorrain being the true posterity of that emperor would have the assistance of heaven in bringing good out of evil, as all good catholics would assist in restoring them to their rights from the extreme horror they felt at the late unfortunate peace. After a glowing description of the excellence of the Guises, the statement proceeded, "from the time that the children of Hugh Capet have seized on the throne, to the prejudice of that emperor's descendants, the curse of God has fallen upon those usurpers; some have lost their senses, others their liberty, or have been struck with the thunder of the church. The greater part of them without health or strength have died in the flower of their age childless. During these unfortunate reigns, the kingdom has become the prey of heretics, such as the Albigenses, and the paupers of Lyons. The last peace, so favourable to the Calvinists, tends also to establish them in France if advantage

* Cayet, liv. 1, p. 5. De Thou, liv. 63.

be not taken of this opportunity to restore the age of Charlemagne to his posterity. The catholics united in the intention of supporting the faith, have therefore agreed together respecting what follows, viz. that in the pulpit and the confessional, such as are of the clergy shall exert themselves in opposing the privileges granted to the Sectarians, and shall excite the people to prevent their enjoying them. If the King shew any apprehension lest the infraction of the peace in this important point should plunge him again into fresh troubles, they shall urge him to throw all the blame on the Duke of Guise; the danger to which this prince will expose himself, by thus braving the hatred of all the protestants will render him dearer to the catholics. His boldness will encourage the timid to sign the league, and thus increase the party. All the confederates shall swear to acknowledge him for their leader. The priests of the towns and villages shall keep a list of those who are in a state to bear arms; they will tell them in confession what they will have to do, as they shall have learned from the superior ecclesiastics, themselves receiving their instructions from the Duke of Guise, who will secretly send officers to form the new levies."

" The protestants have demanded the assembling of the states; they shall be convoked at Blois, a town quite open. The chief of the party will take care to effect the election of deputies, inviolably attached to the ancient religion, and to the sovereign Pontiff. At the same time, captains dispersed through the kingdom, will raise a certain number of determined soldiers, who will promise upon oath to do what may be commanded them, at any time, or in any place. It will also be necessary to engage by mild insinuations, the Duke of Anjou, the King of

Navarre, the Prince of Condé, and every noble who may be suspicious, to go to the states with the King. The Duke of Guise will not be there, both to avoid suspicion, and to be in a better condition to give his orders.

“ Should any one oppose the resolutions which will be taken in the states ; if a prince of the blood, he shall be declared incapable of succeeding to the crown ; if of any other quality, he shall be punished with death ; or if he cannot be laid hold of, a price shall be set on his head. The states will make a general profession of faith ; order the publication of the Council of Trent ; place France under the immediate authority of the Pope ; confirm the ordinances made for the destruction of heresy, and revoke all contrary edicts. The King will thus be disengaged from the promises given to the Calvinists. A time will be allowed for them to return to the church ; and during that interval, preparations can be made for destroying the more obstinate. The states will represent to the King, that to ensure success there must in future be only one person charged with the enterprise ; and they will recommend the Duke of Guise as the only skilful general who has had no connexion with the heretics.”

To give weight to this proposal, the soldiers levied privately in the provinces will appear around Blois, on a certain day, strengthened with some foreign troops. They will carry off Monsieur, and put him on his trial, for having extorted from the King his brother such favourable conditions for the heretic rebels. The Duke of Guise will pursue the insurgents ; make himself master of the principal towns ; put under a strong guard all the accomplices of Monsieur, whose trial he will finish ; and finally,

by the Pope's advice, he will shut up the King in a monastery for the remainder of his days, as Pepin formerly served Childeric."

When the discovery of this paper was made known, it was thought by some to be an invention of the Huguenots, in order to serve their cause by rendering the league odious to the nation, and the King himself treated it as a chimera; but, says Maimbourg, it is certain that this lawyer who mortally hated the Huguenots, (by whom he had been ill-treated, and had in consequence devoted himself entirely to the league,) undertook this journey to Rome, expressly to carry these memoirs, and present them to the Pope in order to engage him in the cause, * * * * Besides the Seigneur John de Vivonne, the King's ambassador in Spain, sent a copy, with the assurance that they had been shewn to King Philip. Still there is great appearance that these memoirs had no other origin than the weak and troubled imagination of this mad lawyer, who put his furious reveries and chimerical dreams on paper, which no one can read without immediately discovering marks of a pitiable aberration of intellect.*

The object of David's journey being admitted by such authority, it will appear very astonishing that a crackbrained individual could have laid out, so distinctly, the plan which the Guises afterwards followed. The journey may have been his own spontaneous idea; but the substance of his memoirs must have been suggested by some one well versed in the movements and resolutions of the party.

The states-general were held at Blois towards the

* *Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. i. p. 49.

close of the year.* All parties had concurred in the wish that they should be assembled. The King imagined that a desire of preserving the peace would influence every deputy; the protestants thought the junction of the malcontents had ensured their success for ratifying the late treaty; while the league, conscious of the number of its members, calculated with certainty on revoking it. Henry appeared before the assembly with more majesty and splendour than was to have been expected from the general imbecility which had for a long time rendered him the ridicule of his people. His speech was good both in substance and language; and his delivery of it is reported to have been very graceful.† He knew of the existence of the league, but was doubtful whether he should give any sign of that knowledge or not; his mother's policy was what he wished to adopt, if possible; he hoped to secure his own authority while the struggle lasted between the protestants and the league; and it was not till he found it out of his power to keep aloof that he declared himself chief of a faction in his own dominions, bearing the title of the holy union.

Espinac, archbishop of Lyons, was the orator for the clergy; the Baron de Senecy, for the noblesse; Versonis, for the commons. The clergy and the nobles contended that one religion alone should be allowed in the kingdom; the commons admitted the good effects of that uniformity, provided it could be effected by mild means. After a discussion of several days, it was decided,‡ by a majority of votes, that the

* 6th Dec. 1576, Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 166. That nobleman kept a journal of the sittings.

† Hist. des derniers troubles, vol. i. p. 9.

‡ 26th Dec. 1576.

King should be entreated to unite all his subjects to the Roman catholic church, by the best means he could; to prohibit the exercise of the pretended reformed religion, both in public and private, and to banish all the protestant ministers.*

The King certainly committed a great error in joining the league; but that step completely disconcerted the plans of the Duke of Guise, who, directly he heard of it, hastened to Blois, and called upon him to fulfil his duty as a member of the holy union, by immediately declaring war against the heretics. It was, however, desirable, that before the sword was again resorted to, an invitation should be sent to the King of Navarre, the Prince of Condé, and Marshal Damville, calling on them to obey the King, and holding them responsible for the war if they refused.† Each of them received a deputation from the three orders; there was, however, but little success to be expected, for they had protested against the assembly as a cabal of their enemies, directly its composition was known. The protestants had been promised that the Etates should be called, unfettered by any influence; but when they did meet there were ten thousand soldiers around Blois.‡ The Archbishop of Vienne addressed the King of Navarre in so pathetic a strain, giving such a picture of the horrors of civil war, that he brought tears into the eyes of that Prince, inured as he was to combats. He replied, that he was not obstinate upon the article of religion, but, believing the protestant to be the best, he would not purchase peace at the expence of

* D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 257.

† De Thou, Le Grain, Perefixe.

‡ D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 238. Duplessis Mornay published a strong remonstrance on the occasion.—*Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 18.

his honour and conscience : the war, he said, with which he was threatened, was not the readiest way to convince him of his error ; and he could not with any safety quit his party at a time when an edict so solemnly given was revoked. With a frankness, for which he was remarkable, he declared, " that if God opened his eyes that he might see his error, not only would he immediately abjure it, but he would contribute his utmost efforts for abolishing heresy altogether."* This declaration is highly characteristic of the epoch. He was at the time in arms for liberty of conscience, and yet declared his readiness to become a persecutor, if a change took place in his opinions.

The deputies to Condé and Damville received the following answer : " We only ask for peace ; let the promises given us be fulfilled and all will be quiet ; besides, we do not acknowledge your states, and we protest against every resolution there made to our prejudice."† Other deputations were sent with no better results. The King and his mother held several councils to devise some plan for averting the war ; but the influence of the league predominated, and nothing short of a complete revocation of the edicts favourable to the protestants could be admitted.

The original declaration of the holy union contained expressions which could not be justified in any manner ; and as the King had joined that body, those terms which were obviously at variance with the royal authority were omitted in the new declaration, drawn up by Humieres, who was chief of the league in Picardy. The new form was much less offensive ; it preserved all the spirit of the

* Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 456.

† De Thou, liv. 63.

league, but appeared to act entirely by the authority and for the service of the King.* That faction had, however, received such powerful support, that it was able not merely to defy the government but to controul its measures, and render its authority subservient to the union. Gregory XIII. secretly encouraged it, while he refused to countenance it openly: he esteemed it a very efficient check to the progress of Calvinism: the idea most terrible to the Vatican was the holding of a national council in France; and while the league existed that could never take place. Philip II. gave it his support; his fears were for the Netherlands, and he was certain that while France was torn with internal troubles, the Flemings could not expect any assistance from that quarter.

Henry, being unable to resist the league, consented to revoke the edict of pacification, and ordered two armies to be raised for subduing the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé. They in the meantime had made preparations for carrying on the war, by increasing their forces and taking possession of different towns, whenever they could do so without an open attack.

The King of Navarre being desirous of knowing the condition and feelings of the Huguenots in different provinces, ordered D'Aubigné to make a circuit and collect information, which might facilitate the raising an army if circumstances required it.

As D'Aubigne was known to have assisted Navarre in making his escape from court, the enterprise was dangerous for him, especially as it was a part of his instructions to go to Blois, while the states were being held, to speak to the Duke of Anjou and

* Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 464.

Marshal Cossé. Being disguised, he succeeded in speaking to the Marshal, who recommended him to abandon the idea of addressing Anjou; but he persisted, and, finding no other means of approaching him, he went to a masked ball, at which the court would be present. One of the Queen's maids of honour not only recognised him herself, but satisfied him that others had also, and pointed out two officers who were ordered to arrest him. He succeeded in making his escape from the room, and passed the river in a boat, after having changed clothes with his footman.*

On retiring from Blois to Chastelliers, he found La Noue preparing to receive the Duke of Mayenne. D'Aubigné succeeded in convincing that general that it was unsafe for him to remain where he was; and persuaded him to repair without loss of time to Poictou.†

The war was renewed at the end of March, 1577: Anjou was appointed to command one army, which marched direct to La Charité. Guise had solicited the lead of the other; but the King's jealousy caused it to be given to his brother Mayenne. He went at once into Poictou and Guyenne, and drove the Huguenots back to Rochelle; he then made a short truce with the King of Navarre: after the expiration of which he waited in Poictou for further orders. Anjou attacked La Charité at the commencement of April, with a very strong force: the town having scarcely any garrison, and being taken by surprise, so that no assistance could arrive, capitulated after sustaining two assaults.‡

* D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 239.

† Ibid.

‡ Hist. des. derniers troubles. Mezaray.—*Abregé Chron.*

The attack on *La Charité* served as a notice for the inhabitants of *Issoire*, a strong and well-fortified town: and the royal army found that place a more difficult conquest than *La Charité*, for the garrison made a most obstinate defence. After sustaining a siege till the beginning of June, they were obliged to surrender at discretion; having suffered the greatest extremities in the defence of the place. The inhabitants were all put to the sword, the town plundered, and then set on fire: there remained nothing of the town but a heap of ruins.*

The affairs of the Huguenots were in a sad condition. The King of Navarre had wished to retain in his little court all the catholics of his old party; innumerable jealousies and cabals were the consequence, in addition to the impediments which their operations sustained from it. Mayenne thought such a time favourable for attempting to reduce *Rochelle*; most of the surrounding towns had been taken or destroyed; but *Brouage* being at the entrance of the port, he resolved on taking that first as a means of ensuring success to his attack on the city.

The operations on this occasion were not confined to the land, for each party had a fleet; and an engagement took place in the channel, where the Huguenots were defeated. The land operations were equally unfortunate for them, and every reinforcement sent from *Rochelle*, was either taken or repulsed. The King of Navarre was detained in defending *Nerac* and *Castel-Jaloux*, which were assailed by *Villars*, Admiral of France. Having succeeded in repelling that commander, he hastened to relieve *Brouage*, and ordered *Turenne* to bring on the rest

* *Davila*, liv. 6, p. 106. *Mem. de Tavannes*, p. 160.

of his army ; before he could arrive the town had surrendered. The besieged being in great extremity, received intelligence of the fall of Issoire, and that Anjou's army was coming to join Mayenne. Fearing a treatment similar to the fate of that unfortunate town, they immediately offered to capitulate ; while Mayenne, fearful that the honour of the achievement would be claimed by the Duke of Anjou, was quite willing to accede to very reasonable terms.*

These events damped the spirits of the Huguenots, and subdued the obstinacy of their ministers ; their affairs were never in so bad a state before, Damville having turned against them.† If they had been pushed at this crisis, the plans of the league might have been completed, so far as concerns the suppression of the protestant religion in France. Damville was besieging Montpellier, commanded by Thoré, and the young Count de Chatillon, eldest son of the late Admiral Coligny ; the place was reduced to great distress, but Chatillon quitting the town, returned in a few days with a considerable reinforcement, and was on the point of giving battle to the besiegers, when a courier arrived with the news of a peace having been concluded between the Kings of France and Navarre.‡ Damville requested the King's permission to continue the siege notwithstanding the peace, and represented the importance of the place. But the King wished for peace, and the protestants insisted upon the possession of Montpellier as one of the conditions.§

* Mem. de Sully, liv. 1. Mezeray.—*Abregé Chron.* Davila, liv. 6. p. 107.

† Davila, liv. 6, p. 108. ‡ Mezéray et D'Aubigné.

§ Marsollier, *Hist. du Duc de Bouillon*, liv. 2. p. 244.

CHAP. XXXIV.

EDICTS OF POICTIERS;—DEATH OF THE KING'S MINIONS;—
TREATY OF NERAC;—ATTEMPT ON LIMOGES;—THE
LOVERS' WAR;—TAKING OF LA FERE, MONTAIGU AND
CAHORS.

THE treaty concluded at Bergerac, in September, 1577, was immediately followed by the edict of Poictiers; which was so favourable to the protestants, that considering the unfortunate results of their attempts during the campaign, we are astonished at the liberality of the terms. The edict contained sixty-four articles, and appears to have been drawn up with great care, and a desire for firmly establishing the peace.* The Romish religion was established in full predominance, but the protestants were secured in their right of public worship; there were a few places where this liberty was restrained; but as a compensation, their privileges in general were so well defined, that they could not be tricked by varied explanations of the articles. Several salutary clauses were inserted respecting baptisms, marriages and burials; one especially gave great satisfaction by putting an end to the disputes and troubles, occasioned by the marriages of priests, friars and nuns. The edict protected the parties from being questioned upon that subject; they were secured from molestation, but they were not allowed to claim any succession, direct or collateral; and their families could only inherit their personal property.

* Davila, liv. 6. p. 109. Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 290.

This edict contains a repetition of the declaration contained in that of 1576, respecting the massacre of the St. Bartholomew, as also the articles restoring the reputation of the admiral and others. It likewise attacked the league in a spirited manner; “all leagues, associations, and brotherhoods, made and to be made under any pretence whatsoever, to the prejudice of our present edict, shall be, and are annulled, and dissolved, &c.”* Henry thought he had subdued his worst enemy, and spoke with exultation of *his* edict.

The edict of Poictiers is so much at variance with the declared object of the war which it concluded, that to comprehend it, one must know the various circumstances which combined to regulate its composition, and which operated upon those who framed it. Three events materially influenced the King to grant such favourable terms: 1. The formation of the league in France had caused a counter-league to be projected; and Henry received information that the different protestant powers had consented to support it;† 2. The fear of the English having possession of Rochelle; for when Brouage was pressed by the Duke of Mayenne, the Rochellese fearful of falling into the hands of their catholic enemies, had applied to Elizabeth for protection: and lastly, the great want of money, under which he laboured, not merely to pay his own troops, but the different sums due to Prince Casimir, who threatened otherwise to march his Reitres back into France.‡ Henry had no troops that he could depend upon to send against him, for a general spirit of insubordina-

* Art. 56. † *Journal de Henri III.* p. 17.

‡ *Mezeray.—Abregé. Chron.*

tion prevailed. The protestants hailed the peace joyfully, and the Prince of Condé accompanied its announcement with a public illumination.*

Henry had at this time a good opportunity to establish his authority and restore prosperity to the kingdom; he had shewn a proper spirit in giving the edict of Poictiers, and a vigorous execution of it would have been a blessing to France. His behaviour, however, was unfortunately the reverse of what it should have been, and the league which escaped being crushed solely on that account, recoiled for a short time, ready to assail the throne with greater fury whenever a proper season should arrive. He resigned himself to luxury and the society of his minions; while to display his orthodoxy he continued to bestow his favours on the religious orders and to fulfil all the processional ceremonies of popery.

Still, if weakness had been all that was objectionable in Henry's conduct, he might have escaped a considerable part of his misfortunes; his minions, by their pride and insolence, completed the alienation of the public mind. We are informed by Le Labourer, "that he took pleasure in having several favourites together; he liked them to be brave, provided they were daring; and witty, provided they were vicious; in fact he refused them nothing, so long as they were magnificent and prodigal, and he was able to shew a marked spite towards those who pretended that he owed something to their birth or merit."† His attachment to these favourites was particularly manifested on an occasion when two of

* Davila, liv. 6, p. 109. *Hist. des derniers troubles*, liv. 1. p. 12.

† *Le Labourer*, vol. ii. p. 51.

them were killed. Quelus, the King's chief minion, had a quarrel with Antraguet, Guise's favourite; they agreed to settle the dispute with the sword, and went early one morning to an appointed place, near the gate of St. Antoine; each being accompanied by two friends.* They fought with such desperation that two of them were killed on the spot; two died afterwards in consequence of their wounds; and two recovered. Quelus lingered for four or five days. The King was constantly at his bed side, and promised the surgeon a recompence of a hundred thousand francs, if he recovered: he died, however, says the journal of the time, calling on the King, "but making no mention of God or his mother."† Maugiron was one of those who were killed on the spot; both he and Quelus were tenderly beloved by Henry, whose grief was like that of a lover bereaved by death of the dear object of his affection. He paid the most absurd attention to their dead bodies, and had magnificent obsequies performed for them.

St. Megrin, another favourite, was murdered a short time after:‡ the Duke of Guise had been informed of his too great intimacy with the Duchess, and placed a band of armed men to kill him, as he quitted the Louvre in the evening. The King had his body interred by the side of Quelus and Maugiron, and erected a very superb monument over their tomb.

The removal of these minions prepared the way for a reconciliation between the King and the Duke

* 27 April, 1578. Quelus or Caylus, was accompanied by Maugiron and Livarot; Antraguet by Riberac and Schomberg, only Antraguet and Livarot survived the fray.

† *Journal de Henri III.* p. 23. *Brantome*, vol. ii. p. 117.

‡ 21 July, 1578. *Journal, &c.* p. 25.

of Anjou. Immediately after the conclusion of the last treaty, that prince had directed his attention to Flanders, where he made sure of being followed by a considerable number of the protestants, who would cheerfully go to help their brethren. Anjou was so much insulted by those insolent courtiers, that with his mother's approbation, he resolved to hasten his departure.* Catherine easily persuaded the King to consent to the plan; but no sooner was he alone with his corrupt advisers than they filled his mind with imaginary terrors, and made him adopt an opinion quite contrary. The difference between the brothers was serious for a time; but when Henry was no longer incited by the pernicious counsels of the minions, he was induced to encourage Anjou's views. In the meantime the effects of the treaty extended to but a very small portion of France. The news of the peace had prevented considerable bloodshed in Languedoc, as the messenger arrived at the instant the two armies were about to engage; but the troops there assembled remained under arms; and through the inexplicable conduct of Marshal Damville, hostile operations were incessantly carried on; and with such success on the part of the protestants, that Damville's army was considerably reduced by their harassing attacks.†

The Queen Mother anxiously perceived the ascendancy which the Guises had obtained; and finding the pulpits resound with animated addresses in behalf of the league, she wished to win over the King of Navarre; and her late success in gaining

* Davila, liv. 6. p. 126. According to De Thou, liv. 66, he left the court the 15 February, 1578.

† D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 333.

Damville afforded her great encouragement. She resolved on a journey to Guyenne, and as Navarre had sent an envoy to court to demand his wife, Catherine availed herself of the pretext of conducting Margaret to her husband. The Queen's retinue was numerous, and well supplied with syrens who were trained by Catherine to entice persons of consequence from their party. The court was at Auch for some months; during which time persuasions and arguments, seductions and military surprises, were continually and simultaneously pursued. Ussac, an elderly personage, governor of La Reole, having fallen in love with one of the nymphs, was heartily laughed at by the King of Navarre and his companions, he felt so piqued at their ridicule, that he delivered the town to a governor of the court party.*

The King of Navarre took his revenge by seizing on another town in the following manner. During a ball given at court, he ordered several confidential persons to join him secretly at an appointed place, with their arms concealed under their clothes. Catherine who fully thought that Navarre had slept quietly at Auch, was surprised to learn next morning that he had marched to Fleurance, and taken it by surprise. She laughed very heartily, and observed that she had got the best bargain; which indeed she had, as La Reole was a far more important place than Fleurance.†

Catherine endeavoured to promote dissensions between Navarre and Condé, and amongst the dif-

* De Thou, liv. 72. D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 335.

† Sully, liv. 1. D'Aubigné *ut supra*, et Mem. du Duc de Bouillon, p. 16. vol. xlix. of the collection of 1788.

ferent captains about them. She quitted Auch in the beginning of February, 1579, to be present at an assembly at Montauban; where a treaty proposed at Nérac, was to be considered. As her voluptuous snares were not likely to succeed among persons of such austere morals, she adopted another plan; she made great professions of piety, and mingled texts of scripture with her conversation. Although she was aided by the eloquence of Pibrac the King's Attorney-general, she was unable to produce any impression on the assembly.* She then returned to Nérac, and renewed the conference with Navarre; after concluding a treaty, the principal object of which was to explain and modify some articles in the edict of Poictiers, she returned to Paris at the end of February.

Catherine's object had completely failed; and instead of beguiling Navarre into concessions suitable to her views, she found that her own expedient had been turned against herself: her chief counsellor Pibrac became enamoured of the Queen Margaret, who persuaded him to consent to terms highly favourable for the Huguenots.†

Meanwhile the peace existed but in name. The numerous instances of Catherine's perfidy, and the known weakness of the King, prevented any confidence being placed in his promises or proclamations, Navarre not only refused to go to court, but kept his army on foot, and several enterprises were

* D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 337.

† Mezeray.—*Abregé Chron. ad annum, 1579.* Guy de Fau sireur de Pibrac, paid such attention to the study of the Scriptures, that his abjuration was expected by many. Duplessis Mornay wrote him a letter on the occasion.—*Mem. de Mornay, vol. i. p. 108.*

carried on which display considerable dexterity and courage. A demand from the government to give up the cautionary towns, which the King of Navarre prudently refused to accede to, made both parties expect a renewal of hostilities ; no opportunity therefore which presented itself, was neglected.

A circumstance which occurred at Limoges presents features peculiar to a state of society, torn by civil wars and animated by religious differences. One Le Mas made overtures for delivering that town to the Huguenots, pretending some injurious treatment that he had received in being unjustly condemned to banishment. D'Aubigné was the person he communicated with, and after several preliminaries were adjusted, a meeting was fixed for a future day, to decide upon their plan of action. When D'Aubigné went into the town, he had sufficient reason to see that the proposal to deliver up Limoges, was only a stratagem for laying hold of some Huguenots of distinction. He observed that he was watched, and with a presence of mind which never failed him, he took out his pocket book, and pretended to draw a plan of the town ; he then returned to the inn, where he had left his horse. He was met by Le Mas, who entered into conversation with him. D'Aubigné without displaying either coolness or anxiety, told him, that he was quite satisfied that the town might be taken in the way agreed upon, and concluded his remarks by saying, that the Prince of Condé would be of the party. Le Mas believing him to be completely duped, thought it would be wrong to lose so good a chance of having Condé in the snare ; he made an excuse for leaving the room, and went to the soldiers on guard. A number of persons were collected at the gates, with the provost

at their head; but Le Mas informing that officer of what had passed, and the spy confirming the account of D'Aubigné's having drawn a plan of the place, they retired, and suffered him to escape. Notwithstanding the cogent reasons which D'Aubigné gave for abandoning the plan, two of his friends persisted in confiding in Le Mas; they went to the same inn where he had been; persons pretending to be dealers came to them, as they had previously gone to D'Aubigné; Le Mas in the meantime having secured their swords, they were seized and the next day were beheaded.*

The war which broke out towards the close of the year, 1579, is generally called the Lovers' War. It certainly was kindled by female influence; but the original cause was the king's suspicious disposition. The Duke of Anjou placed great confidence in his sister Margaret, and she also was greatly attached to him; and a constant correspondence was maintained between them during Margaret's stay at Pau and Nerac.† Henry feared the revival of the party of the *Malcontents*, and resolved to embroil Margaret with her husband; he also resumed his former distrustful behaviour to his brother, and caused the murder of Bussy by procuring some letters he had received from Madame de Montsoreau, and shewing them to the lady's husband.‡ The protestants in the

* D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 339.

† Anjou had returned to court 16th March, 1579. De Thou, liv. 68.

‡ There are several versions of this affair which took place in August, 1579. The *Journal de Henri III.* states that Anjou consented to the plan for entrapping him; De Thou says that the King wished to be freed from the bully, and made use of some letters that were in his brother's possession.

Low Countries had formed an alliance at Utrecht, in the beginning of the year, and everything combined to promote Anjou's enterprise in that quarter; a deputation had been sent to offer him the government.* He pressed the King to aid him in the attempt; Henry was afraid of offending the King of Spain, and opposed his brother's measures, while Anjou, supposing that a war would bring the King to any terms for the sake of restoring peace, pressed Navarre to recommence hostilities.

Henry wrote to the King of Navarre, informing him of the scandalous intimacy subsisting between Margaret and the young Turenne. Navarre informed the accused parties of the communication he had received; they both protested their innocence, rejecting the accusation as a calumny arising with the King's malice. Turenne declared, that it was only a pretext for withholding Cahors and other places of Margaret's dowry. The Queen of Navarre was indignant at the King's behaviour, and wished to rekindle the war. She copied her mother's plans, and influenced a young girl (Navarre's favourite mistress), to exasperate him against the King and the Guises. She took similar means to win over the nobles of importance; and her views were prevented by the pressing letters of the Duke of Anjou.† A war was decided upon chiefly for the foregoing reasons, but likewise in consequence of the overt acts of the government, whose troops had surprised the town of Figeac in Queray, and held the castle besieged.‡

Arrangements had been made for commencing operations at the same time throughout France;

* *Davila*, liv. 6. p. 126.

† *D'Aubigné*, vol. ii. p. 345.

‡ *Mem. de Sully*, liv. 1.

however, out of more than forty expeditions which were planned, only three succeeded; La Fère in Picardy, Montaigu in Poictou, and Cahors in Guyenne. Condé seized upon La Fère the twenty-ninth of November, 1579, and having put it in a posture of defence, he went to Flanders, England, and Germany, in succession, in order to raise fresh means of carrying on the war. As he was returning into France through Savoy he was stopped and plundered without being recognised; he afterwards put himself at the head of the protestants in Languedoc.*

Montaigu was held by a garrison that was little better than a band of highwaymen. De Pommieres, a Gascon, had formed an intimacy with some of them, and having communicated his ideas to La Boulaye and D'Aubigné, they concerted a plan for taking the castle. De Pommieres informed his friends of a good prize, and thus drew a considerable number, including their captain, out of the castle; they were suddenly surrounded by soldiers, and compelled to procure the opening of a postern gate for La Boulaye and his party. The castle was easily taken, but the town would have given them great trouble, if the inhabitants, ignorant of the numbers of their assailants, had not fled in every direction.

Their force was so inconsiderable, that if any attempt had been made to recover the place, they were too feeble to resist; their company not exceeding thirty men, for more than a fortnight. Their situation became dangerous, for the catholics in the neighbourhood would approach the walls, and shake halters at them to indicate their approaching fate. D'Aubigné and his friend La Valliere had wished

* *Esprit de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 224.

from the first to take measures for increasing their numbers; that measures now became absolutely necessary. They went on a market day to Nantes and made some additions to their company. Their different expeditions were successful, and increased their reputation so much, that they were soon joined by sufficient numbers to defy an attack; and within ten days, they had a force of fourteen hundred men.*

The attack on Cahors equals any exploit in ancient or modern history. The King of Navarre left Montauban in the spring of 1580, with about fifteen hundred men. The town itself is very strong, being surrounded on three sides by water; it was commanded by Vesins, a man of great intrepidity;† and the garrison consisted of two thousand veterans, a hundred horsemen, and a numerous body of armed citizens. The King of Navarre and his little army arrived about midnight, within a quarter of a league of the town. "We halted," says Sully, "in a grove of walnut trees, where there was a fountain, at which we quenched our thirst. It was June, and thundered a great deal, but did not rain."‡

Every arrangement being made, the attack on the town commenced by the Viscount de Gourdon advancing with ten men, to force open the gates by means of petards. The noise which this caused, soon brought a body of men to oppose them, and the tocsin was rung to alarm all the inhabitants. The

* D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 346.

† The same who saved Renier's life at the St. Bartholomew.

‡ Mem. de Sully, liv. 1. De Thou however states that the attack was made 5 May, 1580. liv. 72.

people were prepared for an attack; and when the protestants were in the town, they were assailed with stones from the top of the houses, in addition to a sharp firing from the windows. The struggle in the town lasted five days and nights; every part being barricadoed, Navarre fought like a private soldier. His friends entreated him to retire, as there was a reinforcement coming to assist the garrison; but he paid no attention, either to their suggestions, or his own wounds, and said: “What shall become of me on this occasion, is decreed above. Remember that my retreat from this city without securing it to our party, will be the retreat of my soul from my body. My honour is too much interested for it to be otherwise. Let no one therefore speak to me, except of victory or death.” The example of their leader reanimated the assailants, but there is great probability that they would have been overwhelmed, if the captain Chouppes had not heard of Navarre’s perilous situation, and hastened to join him with a hundred horsemen, and five hundred musketeers; this arrival of fresh troops enabled him to get possession of the town.

Notwithstanding the obstinacy of the conflict, the King of Navarre had only seventy of his men killed, but a great number were wounded. The inhabitants lost considerably more. Vesins, the governor, was killed in his shirt, at the first attack; he was so brave a man, that if he had lived, the King of Navarre would have found his undertaking much more difficult, if not impossible.*

The King was no sooner informed of the Huguenots being in arms, than he ordered three

* Sully liv. 1. D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 439. Davila, liv. 6, p. 133.

armies to be raised; Matignon commanded in Picardy; Biron in Guyenne; and Mayenne in Dauphiné. Matignon signalised himself by retaking La Fère; he began the siege on the twenty-second of June, and reduced it to capitulate, on the thirty-first of August, 1580. The sons of Mouy and Montgomery distinguished themselves in the defence of the place; Crillon, and La Valette afterwards Duke of Epernon, were signalised among the assailants.*

The arrival of Biron in Guyenne with his forces, prevented the King of Navarre from pursuing his advantages, and indeed if the three royal armies had pressed the Huguenots, their cause would have been reduced to a low ebb. Fortunately however for them, the Duke of Anjou returned from England about the same time that La Fère surrendered. That prince was desirous to set out for the sovereignty of the Netherlands, and tendered his mediation with the King of Navarre. The court was very desirous of peace as the Reitres were expected every day to enter France, for the purpose of joining Condé; and consequently the terms proposed were very liberal. Anjou immediately set out for Guyenne, whither he was followed by the Duke of Montpensier and Marshal Cossé. By the end of November they had agreed to a treaty, which scarcely differed from the treaty of Nerac; the Prince of Condé willingly acceded to the conditions, and peace was restored to France for the seventh time.†

In order to prevent this accommodation from taking place; and by the continuation of the war

* D'Aubigné, vol ii. pp. 367, et seq. † Davila, liv. 6. p. 139.

in France, hinder the Duke of Anjou from going to Flanders, Philip II. made an offer of assistance to the King of Navarre, if he would break the peace and make himself master of Guyenne: Navarre to shew his sincere intention of keeping the treaty, informed the King of this offer.*

The excursions made by the garrison of Montaigu, induced the Count de Lude to besiege it. Ten different attempts had been made to surprise it since the protestants had been in possession. The siege lasted four months, during which time D'Aubigné had commanded in twenty-nine sorties. This kind of warfare harassed the besiegers, and both parties agreed to abide by the result of a combat between ten men of each side: the day was fixed for the fight, but in the meantime, the Count de Lude received the news of the general peace.†

CHAP. XXXV.

ILL-JUDGED DEPORTMENT OF HENRY III.;—DEATH OF THE DUKE OF ANJOU;—REVIVAL OF THE LEAGUE;—NOTICE OF THE JESUITS.

FRANCE had undergone so many, and such violent convulsions, that a treaty of peace was far from tranquillising the country. The lawless habits acquired during the civil wars had created a dislike to

* De Bury, *Hist. de Henri IV.* vol. i. p. 138.

† D'Aubigné vol. ii. p. 382.

the ordinary occupations of life, and the kingdom was never free from bands of armed men, who were ready alike to promote the private views of some chieftains, or to support themselves by robbery. The King's forces, however, were too numerous to suffer any thing which could be called a revolt; and Henry supposing it better to avoid noticing the existence of such petty feuds, had the benefit of more than four years of peace, in which time he might have restored dignity to his crown, and happiness to his people. But he neglected to do what his duty and his interests equally demanded, and the melancholy conclusion of his reign, was insured by his imprudent conduct at this period.

His brother's expedition into Flanders offered him additional facilities for restoring order, as a number of bold and adventurous spirits had quitted France to join that enterprise; but unhappily for his kingdom and for himself, he occupied the whole of his time in loose trivial pleasures with his minions, or in acts of ridiculous superstition.

He erected the dukedoms of Joyeuse and Epernon into peerages for his two principal favourites, and spared no cost to gratify their wishes. Joyeuse married the sister of the queen consort, and Epernon received a large sum of money, to shew that he was equally beloved by the monarch.*

Notwithstanding the alliance with the Guises, which Joyeuse had formed by marrying one of their family, they felt great jealousy, both of him and of Epernon. That feeling gave way to indignation, when they found the first dignities of the kingdom were bestowed upon them; particularly that of Ad-

* Mezeray.—*Abregé Chron.*

miral of France, notwithstanding it had been promised to the Duke of Mayenne. Epernon wished Guise to resign the office of Grand Master in his favour; but receiving a peremptory refusal, the King made him colonel-general of the infantry, a post which the Count de Brissac had depended upon having. The Guises now saw that they were treated precisely in the same manner that their family had treated the Bourbons and Montmorencies in the preceding reigns.*

The King's demeanour, instead of allaying the resentments of the house of Lorrain, was calculated to excite them to activity; it even held out encouragement to their ambition. He was lowered in the public opinion by his conduct in the pursuit of his pleasures; while his superstitious acts destroyed the small remains of respect, which had been entertained for him. He made solemn processions to Chartres and Lyons to propitiate the virgin, whose influence he thought would procure him offspring.† He gave great encouragement to the monastic orders, and often joined in their processions. He established a new brotherhood called the Penitents, and walked in their procession, covered with sack-cloth.‡

For some time, the King was in great odour of sanctity among the Monks, and they extolled his fervent piety. Edmond Auger, a Jesuit, whom he had taken for his confessor, declared in his sermons, that France had not for a long time had so pious a prince. All accounts agree that he lived more like a Capuchin than a King.§

* Davila, liv. 7. pp. 151 et 4.

† Journal de Henri III. p. 61. ‡ Ibid. p. 59.

§ There was at this time published an anagram of the King's

Meanwhile the King of Navarre remained in his government of Guyenne, he employed a great portion of his time in reading, and serious occupations in general. Plutarch was his favourite author, and contributed considerably to his advantage, by displaying to his view the maxims and conduct of great men.* He had sufficient judgment to perceive that the league would never rest till the protestant religion was abolished; and was also certain that Guise's ambition would impel him to further that object as a means for advancing his own views. It was desirable therefore to have some confidential person at the court, who could inform him of the movements of the faction. Sully was the agent he employed; he had a good pretext for being there, as his two brothers were about the King's person; he was able to mix in the best companies; and while he appeared to be occupied with the gaiety which reigned there, he was careful to inform the King of Navarre of all that passed.†

Discontent was very general; Henry had been so lavish in his expenditure, that repeated edicts for raising money were required. These edicts at length roused the parliament to opposition, and the President de Thou refused to verify one of them, observing that according to the law of the kingdom, which was the public safety, it could not be done.‡

All this contributed to swell the ranks of the league. The people were weary of the heavy contributions;

name.—*Henricus tertius. In te verus Christus.* Hist. des derniers troubles, vol. i. p. 13.

* De Bury. Hist. de Henri IV. vol. i. p. 140.

† Mem. de Sully, liv. 2.

‡ Mezeray.—*Abregé Chron.* vol. v. p. 252.

the clergy were disgusted with the tolerance of the reformed religion; and all classes were angry with Henry's edicts, particularly that forbidding females to wear certain stuffs and ornaments.

Henry appears to have taken no particular pains to avoid giving offence to the King of Navarre. Margaret had passed some time at her brother's court, and had been among the most conspicuous in ridiculing his favourites, and his orders respecting women's apparel and ornaments; she employed some person to seize a messenger bearing his dispatches on that subject. Her intimacy with Guise had long caused his suspicion; this step on her part excited his anger; he reproached her with a detail of her infamy, and desired her to quit the court, and return to her husband.* The King of Navarre had previously demanded her return, and Henry seemed to yield to the wishes of his brother-in-law. She had, however, made but little progress on her journey, when she was overtaken by the King's guards, who searched her litter, unmasked her and her attendants, and conducted them back to Paris, where her ladies were interrogated concerning the Queen's deportment. When the King of Navarre was informed of this, he sent Mornay to court to know what his wife had done to subject her to such an affront; and desiring the King to punish her if she deserved it, otherwise to efface the scandal.† This embassy procuring no satisfaction, D'Aubigné was sent to St. Germain's with a remonstrance, which the King received with marks of displeasure. D'Aubigné perceiving that the King of Navarre would have no satisfaction, he renounced in

* *Lettres de Busbec*, vol. iii. pp. 211 et 230, et *D'Aubigné*, vol. ii.

† *Journal de Henri III.* p. 313, et *Vie de Mornay*, liv. 1. p. 72.

his master's name, the King's alliance and friendship. Henry did not perceive the consequences which would probably follow a rupture with the King of Navarre, and treated the affair in a cavalier manner; but Catherine immediately made an attempt to prevent any disagreement; and had an interview with D'Aubigné respecting it. Henry had resolved to punish D'Aubigné for his temerity, and sent a party to arrest him on his return; but his good fortune enabled him to elude them, and he reached his master in safety. A reconciliation between the Kings was effected by a subsequent deputation.*

An assembly of Notables was held in September, 1583, at St. Germain. The King had called it with a view of obtaining a present of some money; but pretended that his object was solely to redress any grievances which might be complained of. The clergy took the occasion to demand the publication of the Council of Trent.† Joyeuse was sent to Rome about the same time to obtain the Pope's permission to sell some church lands, and brought back for answer, "that no further alienation of the church property could be granted, because the King did not carry on a war, or any other expence for the church."‡ Henry was thus compelled to continue his edicts for imposing taxes, which added to the public discontent; and which the parliament would not register without compulsion.

Philip II. fearing the loss of his possessions in Flanders, thought that his best chance of success lay in exciting some trouble in France, which would operate as a diversion. On the supposition that the

* *Vie de D'Aubigné*, p. 72, and *Hist. Univ.* vol. ii. p. 414.

† *Mezeray*.—*Abregé Chron.* vol. v. p. 273.

‡ *Journal de Henri III.* p. 64.

affront offered to the Queen Margaret would render the King of Navarre willing to adopt his proposal, he sent an offer of men and money to help him in case he would renew the war. He further proposed that Navarre should be divorced from his unworthy wife, and marry the Infanta his daughter; and that he should marry Catherine, the King of Navarre's sister. Duplessis Mornay, who was charged to receive the proposals, was decidedly opposed to such a sacrifice of every principle. "You are not agreeable," said the Spaniards to him, "and yet you do not know what you are doing, when you reject our offers, for the agents of the Guises only wait your refusal to accept our terms."* D'Aubigné and Segur were then appointed to conduct this negociation. The Spaniards offered to pay two hundred thousand ducats to the King of Navarre, on his promising to renew the war; they also undertook to pay other sums at future periods; but while these conferences were pending, and before any thing was decided, intelligence of the Duke of Anjou's death arrived, which put quite a new feature on the affairs of France.†

Francis, Duke of Anjou, after making a successful beginning to his enterprise, was compelled to retire; he went over to England where he lost much time in the persuasion that he should obtain the hand of Elizabeth. After failing in an attempt on Antwerp, he quitted Flanders in June, 1583. He was at court for a short time in the early part of 1584, and returned to Chateau-Thierry, and languished till the tenth of June, when he died.‡ As several attempts had been made to assassinate him, a report was circulated, that he

* Vie de Mornay, liv. 1. p. 76.

† D'Aubigné, Hist. Univ. vol. ii. p. 422.

‡ De Thou, liv. 79. p. 184. mentions, that when his body was

had been poisoned at the instigation of Philip II. This charge is unsupported by proof ; but it is remarkable, that at the same time an attempt was made to murder Queen Elizabeth ; and the Prince of Orange unfortunately fell a victim to the fanaticism of Baltazard Gerard, a Spanish emissary. The enterprise in Flanders opened a fine field for a prince of any character ; but Anjou was not at all qualified for the post he filled. The King of Navarre speaking of him one day, is reported to have said, " I shall be deceived, if he ever fulfils the expectations formed of him ; he has so little courage, and so much duplicity and mischief in his heart ; so little grace in his looks, and such a want of skill in every kind of exercise, that I cannot persuade myself, he will ever do any great thing."*

His death was of great importance, as the King of Navarre thereby became presumptive heir to the crown. His right was incontestible, according to the principles of the Salic law ; and in spite of the violent character of the age, the nation was accustomed to revere the decisions of the parliaments. The alarm which was created by the prospect of a protestant wearing the crown, threw many catholics into the party of the league, and enabled that faction to act openly, and exhibit that additional power that it had gained by its secret operations ; for the Duke of Guise knew his interest too well to stir about the succession before the *last* of the house of Valois was on the throne.†

opened, the inside was found in a corroded state, and bearing symptoms of poison.

* Mem. de Sully, liv. 2.

† Guise was recommended to make a movement in France, while the Duke of Anjou was in Flanders : he said on the occasion, " No, no, I will take care to do nothing openly, so long as the king has a brother ; but if I ever see upon the throne the *last* of the

But the league had not waited for Anjou's death to take measures for changing the succession. Henry's vicious habits had completely destroyed his constitution, and the leaders of the party were well aware of the improbability of either of the brothers having any issue. The Duke of Guise also took advantage of the existing discontent, to enrol a number of partisans among the lower orders; while Epernon's insolence was the cause of his being joined by many persons of distinction.

Nothing however, contributed so essentially to establish the league, as the co-operation of the Jesuits, who though but recently established, had become a numerous and influential body. They were a mongrel kind of clergy, being neither secular nor regular; when they attempted to establish themselves in France, they were asked to give some account of their institution and object, and neither the parliament nor the university could get any other answer than *tales quales sumus.** Their rules comprised every monastic regulation, fitted to enslave the mind and destroy the principles of liberty; while they discontinued their hospitality, charity, and other practices of the monks and friars, which made them the friends of the poor and the stranger.

Although it is well known that the society was founded by Ignatius Loyola, it may not be superfluous to give some account of that individual, as his personal character has had so powerful an effect

house of Valois, I look forward to go to work so securely, that if I do not get all the cake, I will have a good piece of it." See *Preface to Mémoires de la Ligue*, written in 1689; it is to be found in vol. ii. of the Edit. of Amsterdam, 1758.

* Pasquier, vol. i. p. 335.

on his companions and followers. He was born in 1491, at the village of Loyola in Guipuscoa. His mother was of an enthusiastic turn, and passed her aecouchement in a stable, in honour of the Virgin Mary.* Ignatius passed the early part of his life at court and in the camp ; in 1521, he was severely wounded at Pampeluna, then besieged by the French ; the valour which he had displayed in defending the place was remarkable, but his resolution afterwards was truly astonishing. A ball had broken his right leg: finding that it had been unskilfully set, he consented to a new fracture that he might have a perfect cure ; there still remained a bone displaced near his knee, he had it cut out to prevent any deformity.†

In the interval before his recovery he felt the necessity of occupation, and asked for some romances of chivalry ; but his father's austerity excluding all such books from his collection, he was accommodated with one of a different character, entitled *The Flower of the Saints*. Its contents forcibly struck his imagination, and he resolved to consecrate his life to religion. Reflection inflamed his zeal, and he had no rest until he had devoted himself to the service of the *Mother of God*. Having in common with the young men of his country a taste for chivalry, he passed an entire night under arms before the altar of St. Mary ; and, like a true knight burning with a desire to display his zeal, he sought an early occasion to evince the sincerity of his vow ; it is related that he nearly killed a Moor, for having

* *Histoire Impartiale des Jesuites*, p. 8. a work which has been recommended by the Superior of Montrouge, 18mo. Paris, 1826.

† *Ibid.* p. 9.

asserted that St. Mary had ceased to be a virgin when she became a mother.*

Long abstinence and violent discipline, in which he aimed at surpassing St. Dominic, produced a great effect upon him; and during the remainder of his residence in Spain, his conduct made many think him a maniac. His purpose, however, was unchangeably fixed; and although sincerely attached to a lady, who felt an equal esteem for him, he renounced every thing in favour of religion, and undertook a voyage to the Holy Land.

After a residence of six years in France, during which time he had followed the study of theology, he collected a few friends to whom he imparted the project which was uppermost in his ideas; they went to a subterraneous chapel in the church of Montmartre, and established the society by making a solemn vow of chastity and poverty, after the celebration of the mass.† They were afterwards joined by three others, and went to Rome about Easter, 1538. At a meeting then held by them, Loyola, in a forcible speech, shewed his brethren that their efforts in the cause they had undertaken would never be considerable, unless they so organised their society as to be able to increase their numbers at all times and in all places: he proposed also, that as they would combat the world under Christ's banner, they could take no more appropriate name than that of their Divine Redeemer. From that time they assumed the title of the Company of Jesus.‡

* Hist. des Conspirations des Jesuites, &c. par M. Montglave.

† 15th Aug. 1534, festival of the Assumption: the party was seven in number, viz. Loyola, Lefevre, F. Xavier, Rodrigues d'Azevedo, Lainez, Salmeron, and Bobadilla.

‡ An order of Monks, called *Jesuits*, was in existence long

The year following, Loyola applied to Paul III. for his sanction of the new society, which the Pope refused to grant; the petition was referred to a commission of three cardinals, who also objected to the institution. Loyola was indefatigable in his applications, and succeeded in obtaining permission for a certain number of his companions to be employed where the church had need of their labours. Their utility then becoming evident in consequence of the reformation,* the Pope consented to give a bull for their establishment, but not without great caution, for he limited their number to sixty.† They had, however, sufficient influence to have that restriction removed in a short time.

Loyola was chosen general of the order in April, 1541;‡ he then made a public vow in that capacity, "promising to God, and to the Pope his vicar, in the presence of the Virgin mother and the celestial host, that he would observe perpetual poverty, chastity, and obedience."§

Loyola and Lainez immediately occupied themselves in framing statutes for the society. The result of their labours exhibits an organization so com-

before, having been founded by St. John Colombam in the 11th century. That order was abolished by Clement IX. in 1668.

* Nothing can exceed the hatred of the Jesuits to the reformed religion. Ribadeneira, in his work *de Principe Christiano*, says, "the Queen of Scots has been called a martyr; nevertheless, there is a remarkable circumstance in her life, which has very much the appearance of being the cause of her miserable end: she suffered heresy in her kingdom, and would not consent to the death of the bastard Stuart, who was the supporter of it."

† The bull (*regiminis militantis ecclesie*) is dated 27th Sep. 1540.

‡ He died at Rome 31st. July, 1556.

§ *Conspirations des Jesuites, &c.*

plete, that the society has been compared to a sword with its hilt at Rome, and its point everywhere.* The basis of these regulations is the vow of obedience to the Pope and their general; that is a fixed principle with the society; but, with that exception, their constitution is arbitrary, and depends upon circumstances of time and place.† And as unqualified obedience is required from every one, to those immediately above him in the scale, the government is an absolute monarchy, administered with unparalleled order and system.

The entire world is divided by the society into a certain number of *provinces*, each of which is represented at Rome by an *assistant*, who is the medium of communication between the general and the Jesuits of his province. The different provinces are each under the authority of a *provincial*, who makes frequent reports to the general of what occurs, and from time to time travels through his dominion for purposes of inspection. The colleges are governed by *rectors*, who, as well as the provincials, are aided by a secretary and a counsellor.‡

The members of the society are divided into three classes; according to the vows they may have made; those only are eligible to any office who have made the full vow of obedience to the general, *per omnia et in omnibus*, which binds them to further the objects of the society at all hazards, and at any cost;

* *Cette épée dont la poignée est à Rome, et la pointe partout*: this expression originated with a Polish writer, and is mentioned in *l'Anti-Cotton*, p. 169.

† *Comptes des Institutions, &c.*; rendus au parlement de Normandie, 1762, p. 13.

‡ *Les Jesuites modernes*, par M. de la Roche Arnaud. This

and, according to their institutions, every Jesuit must be ready to shed his blood for the general or the society,* and to esteem the orders of their general equal to the commands of God.† This accounts for the numerous plots and assassinations with which the Jesuits were concerned at the close of the sixteenth century; their first generals were either Spaniards or owed allegiance to the King of Spain; and consequently that monarch was assisted in all his plans by the influence of the society. Indeed, the opinion which prevailed in France was, that the order was established solely for the advancement of Spanish affairs, and in the life of their founder it is declared to be their duty to pray earnestly for the King of Spain.‡

They experienced great difficulties before they could gain a footing in France, and were opposed by the clergy, the parliaments, and the university. At last a decree was passed in their favour at the conference of Poissy in 1561, which, while it allowed them certain privileges in common with other orders, enjoined them to assume some other name than that of the *society of Jesus*, which it was said was applicable only to the universal church.§ This condition was never fulfilled on their part, but all the efforts

account perfectly agrees with the different lists published by the society, and containing an account of the provinces, colleges, &c. There are several of them in Jouvencel's History.

* *Comptes des Institutions, &c.* p. 113.

† *Statuatis vobiscum ipsi quicquid superior præcipit, ipsius Dei præceptum esse.* *Reg. Soc. Jesu.—Lyons, 1607.*

‡ *Dies noctesque Deum nostrum placare atque fatigare præcibus debemus, ut Philippum, &c.* *Vita Ignatii, p. 169.* Antwerp, 1587.

§ *Comptes des Institutions, &c.* p. 125. *Pasquier, vol. i. p. 342.*



to dislodge them were ineffectual; they were the champions of ultramontanism, and in consequence obtained the full benefit of the Pope's protection.

At the Council of Trent, in 1562, Lainez, their general, spoke with great animation for two hours, to prove, that in every thing connected with the clergy, there was not a spark of authority but what emanated from the Pope. This discourse was warmly extolled by the Pope's dependents, and as strongly censured by the others. The Bishop of Paris was confined to his chamber by illness, but addressed some prelates who called upon him. "This new doctrine," said he, "changes the celestial kingdom into a temporal tyranny, and converts the bride of Jesus Christ into a handmaid prostituted to the will of a man. To declare one bishop of divine right, and distributor of power to the others, was to say there was only one bishop, and that the others were his vicars, who could be dismissed by him." The bishop then shewed how the episcopal authority had been attacked by the institution of the mendicant orders in the twelfth century, and that the new order, which seemed constituted for troubling the peace of the church, attempted to abolish the episcopal jurisdiction altogether. The legates, finding that this discussion had kindled a violent feeling, were fearful of the results if the controversy should be taken up out of doors; they therefore ordered Lainez to give no copy of his speech; but he could not refrain from publishing what he thought did honour to the Pope, and was calculated to conciliate the infant society.*

When the war became necessary to the plans of

* F. Paolo.—*Hist. du Concile de Trente*, p. 597.

Philip II. we find the Jesuits the most active agents of the league ; and Henry Samnier, a Jesuit, was sent in 1581, on a mission to several catholic princes, to observe and learn their feelings and views. He traversed Germany and Italy, to excite the foreign powers against the King of France, whom he accused of favouring the Huguenots.* No one could be better qualified than he was for the task ; he would appear according to circumstances dressed as a priest, a soldier, or a merchant ; and could assume the language and manners of each class, as easily as their garments. Dice and cards were as familiar to him as his breviary ; and he maintained there was no harm in his doing such things, as it was for a good work.†

Father Claude Matthieu, also a Jesuit, was another very active agent for the league ; he made four journeys to Rome on behalf of the faction. The curates were able to effect a great deal in recommending the holy union from the pulpit, and the confessional, and most of the French clergy became outrageous leaguers ; but their exertions being local, they could not have excited such a general spirit of revolt if they had been deprived of the omnipresent influence of the Jesuits, who regulated their movements, and formed a general communication, not only between the party and their chiefs, but with each other.

Two letters written by Claude Matthieu to the

* Villeroy has preserved a document entitled, *Mémoire du Conseil tenu par ceux de la Ligue, &c.* It embraced a general plan for creating a movement throughout Europe, and finding employment for such princes as they expected would oppose the league : among other projects was this, “ tachez par le moyen des Jesuites d'attirer en une Ligue le Roi d'Ecosse, qui se pourroit aider de l'espérance de l'armée d'Espagne, &c.”—*Mem. d'Etat.* vol. iii. pp. 112, et seq.

† *Hist. des Conspirations, &c.* p. 35.

Duke of Nevers have been preserved, and substantiate the foregoing remarks. “ I have sent,” says he, “ to M. de Guise, one of our fathers, who has accompanied me during this journey. The Pope does not consider it right that any attempt should be made on the King’s life, for that cannot be done in good conscience ; but if his person could be secured, and those removed from about him who are the cause of the ruin of the kingdom, giving him servants, who would give good advice and make him attend to it, he should approve of that.”* Nothing can more clearly shew that the Jesuits were actively concerned in this attempt to dethrone the King.

CHAP. XXXVI.

THE CARDINAL OF BOURBON HEAD OF THE LEAGUE;—TREATY OF PHILIP II. WITH THE LEAGUE;—TREATY OF NEMOURS;—EXCOMMUNICATED OF NAVARRE AND CONDÉ BY SIXTUS V.

“ THERE’S such divinity doth hedge a king,” that in spite of the injury which Henry had inflicted on his dignity by his indiscreet behaviour, the faction that aimed at dethroning him, was obliged to have recourse to libels and exaggerations, widely circulated, to prepare the public mind for any violent measure, which ambition might induce the Duke of Guise to attempt.

* Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 667.

The King was publicly spoken of with the greatest contempt, and every day produced the most insolent attacks upon his person and court; he was described as a Sardanapalus, a sluggard meriting the fate of Childeric who was put into a monastery after he had been deprived of his crown.* Henry's device was three crowns with the motto, *Manet ultima cœlo*, for which was substituted, *Manet ultima clauстро*; in allusion to the tonsure, or monacal crown, which he would receive whenever he should enter a cloister.†

The journal of the time informs us, that in November, 1584, a Huguenot gentleman named Pierre d'Esquaise, was seized with some defamatory verses and papers in his possession; he confessed they were his composition; was hanged at the Grêve, and his body burned with the papers.‡ This shews that the leaguers were not the authors of all the libels which were circulated at this period; but it is remarkable that out of so many persons who were liable to punishment for that offence, the only one who suffered should be a Huguenot. The magistrates were not backward in doing justice on this occasion, but the league was indebted to some powerful influence for protection. The Queen Mother had long entertained a violent hatred for the King of Navarre, and by excluding him from the succession, there was a prospect of establishing the children of the Duchess of Lorrain, her daughter; if therefore she gave the league no positive assist-

* Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 1. p. 15.

† The following was placed one night on the door of the Louvre.

*Qui dedit ante duas unam abstulit, altera nutat;
Tertia tonsoris est facienda manu.*

‡ Journal de Henri III. vol. i. p. 74.

ance, her views would prevent her from joining in opposing it.

“The Queen,” says the Duke of Nevers, in his memoirs, “intended that the crown should descend to the children of her daughter, the Duchess of Lorrain; as the King of Navarre was a Huguenot, and the Cardinal of Bourbon old; and Guise was employed only as the servant of M. de Lorrain, for the morsel was never intended for him.”*

The Duke of Guise performed his part with great address, with strong assurances of support from Spain; he saw that to obtain the crown of France was not altogether chimerical; but he did not blind himself to the dangers of his attempt, and was long entreated to act openly before he would acquiesce.

He won over the Queen Mother by pretending to further her views; the clergy were already gained by the hope of annihilating the reformed religion; and the promise of such recompenses as success would enable him to grant, had secured a considerable number of the nobility. Preachers addressed the public to inflame them by describing the horrors which would be consequent on the King of Navarre’s succeeding to the crown. It was stated among other things that above ten thousand Huguenots and Politiques were ready to massacre all the catholics in order to serve the King of Navarre.†

But as it was better to blind his real object for some time, Guise announced that the Cardinal of Bourbon was the lawful heir to the crown, his nephew

* *Mem. de Nevers*, vol. i. p. 163.

† *Procès-verbal de Nicolas Poulain*. This document is to be found in the 1st. vol. of the *Journal de Henri III.*

being excluded on account of heresy ; and it was immediately proposed to the Cardinal to join the league. He being a very ignorant and bigotted man, was easily persuaded to consent : he was dazzled with the hope of a crown, which according to the course of nature, he could never expect to have ; for he was more than sixty years of age, while his reigning King was only thirty-four. Guise further suggested that he should get a dispensation to marry the Duchess of Montpensier ; he was insensible to the ridicule, and consented to the proposal.*

Henry could not long remain ignorant of what was passing ; he perceived that the best thing which could be done, was to draw the King of Navarre to court ; and as he acknowledged him to be the rightful heir to his throne, their interests evidently required a sincere reconciliation. He sent the Duke of Epernon to persuade him to return to the catholic church, and to co-operate with him in subduing the league. Navarre received the messenger with great affability, and a long conference ensued, which however produced no effect on the Huguenots who were too firmly grounded in their principles to be flattered into a desertion of them.† So far indeed was this meeting from producing good, that the leaguers made use of it as an argument for their cause ; they announced that the King's declaring Navarre his successor would confirm him in his heresy ; and indeed the account of the conference which was drawn up, and published by Duplessis Mornay, represented the advantage of the discussion

* De Thou, liv. 81.

† There is an account of this conference in the *Memoirs d'Etat de Villeroy*, vol. iii. pp. 1—112. Edit. Amsterdam, 1725.

to have been entirely in favour of the Huguenots, and that the King of Navarre was more than ever confirmed in his sentiments.*

Notwithstanding, the King of Navarre was so far persuaded, that he had determined on an interview with the King of France. His little court was not exclusively Huguenot, and the entreaties of his catholic friends were not without effect. It was principally by the recommendation of M. de Segur that he had been influenced, and D'Aubigné, whose zeal for the protestant cause was unbounded, considering that the only way to prevent the King's intended journey was to alarm his advisers, resolved on the following expedient. He took an occasion when he passed through a saloon, in which there were some young gentlemen of the court, to lead Segur aside to a window, which looked upon a steep precipice; he then told him, that he would be compelled to take that leap, the day that the King of Navarre set out for the court of Henry III. Segur, astonished, asked; "But who will dare do that?" "If I cannot do it alone," said D'Aubigné, "here are some gentlemen who will assist me." The young men perceiving they were alluded to, immediately cocked their hats, and assumed a determined air, although they knew nothing of what was passing, which had such an effect on M. de Segur, that the journey was abandoned.†

In the meantime the Duke of Guise was busily occupied in negotiations with the King of Spain. For greater convenience, he had retired to his

* Maimbourg.—*Hist de la Ligue*, vol. i. p. 76. Et Perefixe.—*Hist. de Henri le Grand*.

† *Vie de D'Aubigné*, p. 75.

government of Champagne, and at the close of the year, a treaty was concluded between the envoys of Philip II. and the Cardinal of Bourbon, who had assumed the title of first prince of the blood and presumptive heir to the crown. The treaty declared that to preserve the catholic religion in France, in the event of the King's dying without children, the Cardinal of Bourbon should succeed him, as next heir to the crown, from which should be for ever excluded all heretics, and encouragers of heretics, that the cardinal being king, should banish all heretics from the kingdom, and cause the decrees of the Council of Trent to be observed; the King of Spain on his part undertaking to supply the league with money, which was afterwards to be repaid to him, by aid in subduing the revolted Flemings, and by the cession of the town of Cambray.*

The Pope's public approbation appeared indispensable for an union, the object of which was the advancement of the Romish faith; but in vain did father Matthieu travel from Paris to Rome to claim the protection of his holiness; for although the Cardinal Pellevé used great influence, he could make no impression on Gregory XIII. That Pope could not clearly comprehend the object of the league, nor would he openly sanction an enterprise against a King so decidedly catholic, and entertaining so much veneration for the church of Rome as Henry III. He took time to reflect upon it, and summoned several experienced cardinals to examine the propositions of the league; their answers were far from removing his doubts, and he decided upon refusing the least thing which might be considered an ap-

* De Thou, liv. 81. Davila, liv. 7.

proval of the league; but in dismissing Father Matthieu, he recommended the union to watch incessantly over the interests of religion, and to aim at the extirpation of heresy.*

Philip II. in the meantime became impatient at such delays; an embassy had arrived in Paris, intreating the King of France to become the protector of the new states, and the Spanish agents sent word that Henry was inclined to listen to their proposal. Some decisive measure therefore was urgent; he called upon Guise to act openly, and informed him that he would otherwise send their treaties to the King of France, and abandon the league to his resentment.† Guise found himself compelled to continue the course into which he had entered, and preparations were made for taking the field. The Cardinal of Bourbon left Paris for his diocese of Rouen, whence he passed into Picardy, and foreign levies were hastening to the frontiers, while experienced captains were employed in collecting the nobility and gentlemen of the party.‡ The Jesuits proposed a plan to get possession of Boulogne for the convenience of receiving supplies from Spain.§

* As these communications were *vivæ voce*, it is not surprising that there should be variations in the accounts of them. Legrain, in his *Decade*, says (liv. 3. p. 141), “Couriers were sent to Rome to obtain the Pope’s sanction to be *parrain* of the league; but he said that he did not know the mother of the beast.” On the other hand, De Thou (liv. 81.), relates a conversation with the Duke of Nevers, who declared that the Jesuit Matthieu had received the Pope’s promise of a bull in favour of the league directly Guise was able to act.—See also Davila, liv. 7. Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, liv. 1. et *Mem. de Nevers*, vol. ii. p. 77.

† Mezeray.—*Abregé Chron.* vol. v. p. 275.

‡ Davila, liv. 7. p. 197.

§ *Procès-verbal de Nicolas Poulain*, p. 139. Davila, liv. 8. p. 324.

The Cardinal of Bourbon issued a manifesto,* declaring the object of the league; and very soon after the emissaries of the faction seized upon towns in different parts of France. Guise fixed his headquarters at Chalons, anxiously waiting for the arrival of reinforcements, but tolerably certain that the King would not attack him. In spite of the exertions that had been made, his army amounted to no more than four thousand infantry, and fifteen hundred horse; a force that might so easily have been dispersed, that Nangis meeting Guise at Chalons, asked him how he should act if the King sent any troops against him. Guise answered, “Retire as quick as possible into Germany, and wait a more favourable opportunity.”†

Henry was unable to decide upon the best measures to be taken at such a crisis; and unfortunately for him his advisers were by no means unanimous. Epernon, Chiverny, the Chancellor, D’O, and De Retz, recommended him to join the King of Navarre and the Huguenots, who would cheerfully serve under him, against their avowed enemies. Joyeuse, Villequier, Villeroy, and Bellievre, condemned the idea of the most Christian King availing himself of the services of the Huguenots, whose friendship would disgrace him; they urged that the chiefs of the league should be satisfied, and that then it was to be hoped the party would dwindle away.‡ The best plan would have been to send an army at once against the Duke of Guise; Marshal d’Aumont strongly recommended it, and prepared to march with a few regiments hastily collected.§ His loyalty, however, was frustrated

* Dated 13th March, 1585, and it is to be found in Davila, liv. 7, et De Thou, liv. 81.

† *Memoirs de Beauvais-Nangis.* ‡ Davila, liv. 7.

§ Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. i. p. 107.

by the Queen Mother's representations; she was on good terms with Guise, and wished also to remain at peace; by her advice the King published a declaration* in answer to the manifesto of the league, in which he appears to justify himself, rather than to condemn his rebellious subjects; to make use of the language of a contemporary, “forgetting the arms which nature and necessity presented to him, he had recourse to pen and paper; he made a declaration, but so tamely, that you would say that he did not dare to name his enemy, and that he resembled a man who complains without saying who has beaten him.”†

The league succeeded in surprising several towns, but failed at Metz, where Epernon had a good garrison; at Bordeaux, where Matignon, by his activity counteracted a plot for overthrowing his authority; and at Marseilles, which one Dariez a person in authority had undertaken in concert with a man named Chabannes, to deliver to the Duke of Nevers, the intended future governor; the inhabitants were, however, persuaded to take arms, and they succeeded in capturing Dariez and his confederate; they were immediately tried, condemned, and hanged. The King was much pleased at this spirited affair, and told the deputation sent to convey the news, that he could never sufficiently reward their fidelity.‡

When fear chills the heart of a sovereign, his dignity and majesty is lost; for the audacity of revolt increases in the proportion of its impunity. Could Henry have again exhibited the conqueror of Jarnac, he would have soon settled the affair; but wishing to appease the revolt, rather than quell it, he entreated

* Given at length by Davila.

† Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 1. p. 20.

‡ Davila, Mezeray, et Mathieu,

the Queen Mother to meet the Duke of Guise, and while she assured him of the King's friendship, to offer him the full extent of his wishes, rather than disturb the peace of the kingdom. Guise presented a request signed by himself and the Cardinal of Bourbon, which called for an edict for the extirpation of heresy, and the expulsion of the Huguenots (by force) from their cautionary towns; the King was also to renounce the protection of Geneva, and to become a partisan of the league.* Such a request could not be granted without some consideration, and while the subject was under discussion, the King of Navarre made a declaration, copies of which were sent to all the powers of Europe.† When the league had shewn a hostile disposition, the Huguenots were pleased to witness such a division in the camp of their enemies; but when it became apparent that Henry was in danger of succumbing, he sent an offer of his services, urging him to lose no time in preparing for the storm which was ready to burst over him. The King wrote in reply that he should not yet take arms. "Let the Guises strike the first blow," said the King, "in order that you may not be accused of breaking the peace, and that it may appear that they are the cause of the war."‡

As a treaty was all but concluded between the King and the league, the King of Navarre foresaw that whatever occurred would be to the injury of the protestants; he therefore took the opportunity of answering the various calumnies against him, in the above mentioned declaration, which may be called

* Hist. des. derniers troubles, liv. 1. p. 22.

† Dated Bergerac, 10th June, 1585. It was written by Mornay.

‡ Esprit de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 270.

his appeal to the world. He declared that he bore no ill will to the catholics; that with respect to his changing his religion he had been compelled at the St. Bartholomew, to make a profession of catholicism, but that he could not renounce the faith in which he was educated, unless its error were clearly pointed out, and that in his case, they had always tried to destroy rather than instruct him. He contradicted several assertions which had been made respecting him, and concluded by intreating the King to allow him and Guise to settle the quarrel between them in single combat, or with two, ten, or twenty combatants on each side; offering to fight in any place which his majesty might choose in France, or if the Duke of Guise preferred, he would meet him out of the kingdom.*

This declaration produced a great effect on the minds of the nobility, who were equally pleased with its reasonableness, and the generous wish to avoid bloodshed. It was publicly said that Guise could not refuse such a challenge; but he would not make the cause of the league appear connected with a private quarrel, and sent a message to that effect.†

The Queen's conference with Guise ended in the conclusion of the treaty of Nemours.‡ The dis-honourable terms therein extorted from the King were worse than any war; for the success of the faction on this occasion encouraged them to still greater attempts, and was the cause of many persons joining the party. By the treaty, Henry bound himself to forbid in his dominions the exercise of any other

* Cayet, liv. 1. p. 8. Mem. de Duplessis Mornay, vol. i. p. 503.

† Davila, liv. 7. Perefixe, p. 50. G. Leti. Vita di Sisto V.

‡ Dated 7th July, 1585. Registered in parliament 18th.—Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. pp. 686 et 692.

religion than the Romish, under pain of death ; the Calvinist ministers were ordered to quit the kingdom within a month, and in six months all other Calvinists who would not abjure ; heretics were declared incapable of holding any office, and the mixed commissions were to be abolished ; the King agreed to pay the sums which might be due to Guise's foreign levies, and to give a number of considerable towns as places of security.*

The King was forced to declare war against the Huguenots ; and measures were discussed for attacking them immediately, and in all parts of France. The leaguers persuaded Henry that a few days would settle the affair, and that the report of the first enterprise would frighten the King of Navarre into submission.† The Huguenots assuredly were in a dreadful dilemma, for the King of Navarre had been kept inactive by Henry's promises and declarations, and Condé's army was very much diminished.

The King of Navarre was aware of the desperate state of his cause ; and speaking subsequently of the King's joining the league, he declared that his regret was so great, and his apprehension of its fatal results so sensible, that the news of it bleached half of his moustachios.‡ However, his energy was not to be paralysed by a dread of danger, and he took measures for employing what resources he had, and for negotiating for assistance abroad. It was some consolation for him to know, that the additional power which the Guises had acquired, would be the means of raising friends for him, particularly the Montmorencies, Biron, and Matignon.

* Davila, Pasquier, et Mathieu.

† Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. p. 24.

‡ Mathieu, liv. 8. p. 501.

While the Huguenots complained of the late edict as a cruel persecution, the catholics were murmuring at the King for having given them so much time as six months. The complaints reaching the King, he sent one morning* for the president of the parliament, the provost of the trades, and the dean of the cathedral. Money was what he required, and therefore he called upon them for it as otherwise he could not accede to the public wish, by declaring war against the Huguenots. He told them that he was pleased at the good counsels they had given him, and confidently expected a favourable result. After telling them that he should require three armies, one in Guyenne, another near his person, and a third to protect the frontier, and prevent any invasion of Reitres, he added, “it is against my own opinion that I have undertaken this war; but no matter, I am resolved to spare neither care nor cost for its success; and since you were unwilling to believe me, when I advised you not to think of breaking the peace, it is at least fair that you should help me to carry on the war; for as it is by your advice alone that I have undertaken it, I cannot think of being the only one to bear the burden. Mr. Chief President, I applaud your zeal, and that of your colleagues, who have so highly approved of the revocation of the edict;† but I am desirous you should know that war is not to be carried on without money, and that so long as this lasts, it will be in vain to come and tease me about your salaries being stopped. You, Mr. Provost, must be persuaded that I shall not do less with regard to the annuities of the Hotel-de-Ville; therefore call together the inhabitants of my good city of Paris, and

* 11th August, 1585.

† That of Poictiers which was favourable to the protestants.

tell them that since the revocation of the edict has given them so much pleasure, I hope they will not be averse to furnishing me with six hundred thousand livres, which will be requisite for carrying on the war." Then turning to the Cardinal of Guise who was present, the King coolly observed, "that he hoped for the first month to be able to avoid troubling the clergy, for he would rather empty the purses of the other classes; but that for the subsequent months, so long as the war lasted, he intended applying to the church without waiting for the Pope's consent; for as it was a religious war he ought in conscience to make use of the church revenues: "It is," said the King, "especially at the solicitation of the clergy, that I have burdened myself with this undertaking; it is a holy war, and therefore, the clergy must support it."

Henry then waited to hear their reply, and finding they were for remonstrating against his proposal, he cut them short by saying—"You ought then to have listened to me and kept the peace, instead of deciding on a war in a shop or a church; and, really, I apprehend, that while we think to put an end to *preaching*, we may endanger the *mass*."^{*} The King's aversion to the war was thus made known; the populace were taught to suspect him of duplicity, and when the news arrived of the successes which the King of Navarre had obtained in Guyenne, Dauphiné, and other provinces, they declared that it was owing to Henry's treachery, and charged him with being connected with the Huguenots by a secret treaty.

The insolence of the league received an additional stimulus from the open encouragement

^{*} Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. Davila, liv. 7. Cayet, liv. 1 p. 8. De Thou, liv. 81.

afforded by Sixtus V.* That Pope had succeeded Gregory XIII. who died in April 1585. Having been bred up a Franciscan, and filled the office of grand inquisitor, he would naturally incline towards a persecuting faction; and we find that, immediately after his election, he gave the league the benefit of his influence. Being less scrupulous than his predecessor, he consented to give a bull, declaring the Bourbon princes a bastard and detestable race; and excommunicating the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé as incorrigible heretics, who had forfeited all right to every thing in reversion, as well as in possession, and particularly to the succession to the crown of France.†

The arrogance of this act of pontifical authority created a ferment amongst all classes who were independent of the league; and when it was published in Paris, the parliament made a strong remonstrance against it.‡ One of the counsellors recommended to the King to throw it into the fire, in the presence of the assembled clergy, and to order the attorney-general to prosecute those who had brought it from Rome.§ It was easy to shew how the King was interested in this bull, for if the Pope could nominate a successor to the throne, he could easily extend that power to the dethronement of a reigning King, a thing which Pope Zachary had done to Chiladeric III. But Henry had such a dread of the league, that notwithstanding the repeated exhortations he received from faithful advisers, he never would allow proceedings against the publishers of the bull; con-

* Felix Peretti, well known as Cardinal Montalto.

† The bull was dated, 9 Sept. 1585.

‡ Le Grain, liv. 3. p. 145.

§ Journal de Henri III. vol. 1. p. 79.

tenting himself with refusing to give it his sanction. The insulted princes, however, would not so quietly submit to the pontifical audacity: they drew up a protest against the bull, appealing to the peers of France, and the decision of a future council, and declaring Sixtus *soi-disant* Pope to be a liar and Anti-Christ. This was publicly put up in all the streets of Rome and the houses of the cardinals, and even on the doors of the Vatican.*

The league in the meantime became clamorous for the war, and Henry was compelled to prepare three armies. But before that was ready which was destined to oppose Navarre, and which the Duke of Mayenne was to command, he sent a deputation to that prince, entreating him to return to the catholic church, or at least to suspend the public exercise of Calvinism for a few months, to give time for an amicable adjustment. The deputies were Lenôncourt, afterwards cardinal; and the president Brulart, accompanied by some doctors of the Sorbonne. They were unable to make any impression on Navarre, who told them that he was ready to be instructed according to the decisions of a council freely chosen, and not with a poignard at his breast.†

Every attempt at persuasion proving ineffectual, the King expressed his concurrence in the wish of the league; he published an edict authorising the governors of the provinces to pursue the Huguenots, without waiting for the expiration of the six months fixed in the treaty of Nemours. Navarre forbade the edict being executed where he possessed authority; treated as enemies the people of all towns that

* Leti, De Thou, Davila, and many others.

† Davila, liv. 7. Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, liv. 1.

adhered to the league; and confiscated their property for the support of his army.* The flames of civil war were once more kindled in this afflicted kingdom.

CHAP. XXXVII.

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT OF THE DUKE OF MERCŒUR AGAINST THE HUGUENOTS;—SIEGE OF BROUAGE;—ENTERPRISE ON ANGERS;—CAPTURE AND DEFENCE OF OLERON;—CONFERENCES BETWEEN THE QUEEN MOTHER AND THE KING OF NAVARRE;—RENEWAL OF THE WAR;—BATTLE OF COURTRAS.

THE renewal of the war made it necessary for the King of Navarre to hold a consultation with the Prince of Condé and Marshal Montmorency. They decided upon a plan of action, and made exertions to supply their different towns with provisions and ammunition. Their party had recently been joined by the Duke of Thouars, of the family of Tremouille, whose sister was shortly to be married to the Prince of Condé.

The Duke of Mercœur began the campaign, by suddenly quitting his government of Brittany, to attack the Huguenots in Poictou.† With only two thousand men, he expected to perform some great achievements, relying on his activity to make up for

* Hist. des derniers troubles, p. 27.

† Cayet, liv. 1. p. 10. Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 2.

the deficiency of his numbers. He had begun to lay waste that province, when the news of his arrival reached Condé, who had lately quitted St. Jean d'Angely, with a little army he had collected. He lost no time in marching direct, to give battle to the Duke of Mercœur; but he being sensible that the prince's force was superior to his own, resolved on retreating to Fontenay, a town held by the catholics, and there await the arrival of the royal army under Mayenne. But the inhabitants of that town being more attached to the King than to the league, refused to admit him within their walls, under the pretence of having no orders from the King to that effect. He was therefore compelled to take his quarters in the suburbs, and make exertions to procure provisions, as the inhabitants refused to supply him. In this condition, he was attacked by the Prince of Condé. The battle was severely contested; the catholics having the benefit of position, and their assailants that of numbers. When night came, Mercœur perceiving that if the fight should be renewed the following day, he would almost certainly be defeated, he resolved on decamping as secretly as possible, which he did in the middle of the night. Condé followed him the next day, and so harassed his march, that his men had no time to take refreshment. At last he succeeded in crossing the Loire, after leaving behind, not only the plunder acquired at the commencement of his expedition, but the greater part of his own baggage: several parties of his men also fell into the hands of Condé.*

The Huguenots was very successful in several af-

* Davila, liv. 8. p. 280. Le Grain, liv. 4. p. 147. D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 435.

fairs which followed this, and Condé considered himself equal to the siege of Brouage, then held by St. Luc, with a considerable garrison. The people of Rochelle were desirous of retaking Brouage from the catholics, and contributed their assistance to the enterprise. The town was invested completely at the beginning of October, 1585, and being attacked by sea, as well as by land, its fall was confidently expected, when a circumstance occurred which called off the Prince of Condé, and caused such a change of affairs, that Marshal Matignon had time to raise the siege. The citadel of Angers had been seized upon by three captains in a treacherous manner: they were of different parties, but had acted in concert on this occasion. Their names were Du Halot, a royalist; Frosne, an enemy of Brissac, the governor of Angers; and Rochemorte, a friend of the King of Navarre. They entered the town on a friendly pretence, and while Frosne was at dinner with the officer left in charge of the place, his companions murdered the soldiers, who were not of their faction. The commanding officer was killed soon after, and the castle was in the power of the confederates. But instead of retiring into the castle, Du Halot went into the town and declared that he had acted in the name and on the behalf of the King; that however had no effect on the people, who arrested, and soon after hanged him. The inhabitants immediately attacked the castle, which the confederates perceiving, drew up the bridge before Frosne could enter: he tried to climb by the chain, but was wounded by the assailants, and falling into the moat, was killed by a stag that was kept there. Rochemorte, alone remaining, was demanded for whom he held the castle? He answered, “for the King of Navarre.” Preparations

were then made for a regular attack, whenever the Duke of Mayenne should arrive. A few days after, Rochemorte himself was killed by two musket balls striking him while at one of the windows. There then remained sixteen persons in the castle, but as they had lost their leaders, they proposed to capitulate.*

Condé had been informed of the surprise of the castle; and learning at the same time that the place required assistance, he dispatched D'Aubigné with eleven hundred men to secure the town to his party. D'Aubigné, aware of the importance of the place, lost no time in executing his commission; but unfortunately he was countermanded. Some persons had persuaded the prince that such an undertaking was worthy of himself: eleven days were lost in preparing for his departure; he relinquished the siege of Brouage, which was on the eve of completion, leaving only a small portion of his army to mark the town, and when he arrived at Angers, on the twenty-first of October, he found that place occupied by six thousand of the enemy.†

Condé advanced to attack the faubourgs, but soon discovered that the castle had fallen into the hands of the enemy. The object of his journey was thus completely foiled; great confusion ensued in his army, and he experienced such difficulty in making his escape that this expedition nearly caused his ruin. An army was ready to cut off his retreat in every direction; Mayenne, Epernon, Joyeuse, and Biron, were each at the head of armies opposed to him; and La Chastre had undertaken to prevent

* Davila, liv. 8. p. 286. Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 13. Mem. de Sully, liv. 2. Cayet, liv. 1. D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 440.

† D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 442—6. Davila, liv. 8.

his crossing the Loire, every bridge and ford of which was occupied. His numbers in the meantime constantly diminished, as the alarm made many seek their safety by flying separately. The Duke of Rohan persuaded Condé to retire privately from the army, and escape by passing through unfrequented routes : he followed this advice, and went through Brittany into Guernsey, whence he passed over to England. After the prince had quitted the army, his followers divided into small parties, and succeeded in making their escape by sacrificing their baggage ; some of them, however, were so unfortunate as to be discovered, and were put to death by the catholics.*

Doubts were entertained for some time of Condé's safety, and the protestant party was depressed in the same proportion as the league was encouraged by the rumour. The King was loudly called upon to annihilate the party ; the catholic generals placed garrisons in all the towns around Rochelle and St. Jean d'Angely to prevent assistance reaching them, and reinforcements were sent to the army in Guyenne to ensure the defeat of Navarre, and if possible to make him a prisoner.†

At the commencement of the following year the King of Navarre published several declarations, in which he laments the miseries which a war inevitably inflicts upon a country, and shews that he is not to be blamed for the present struggle. Addressing the clergy he says : “ If war delights you so much ; if you prefer a battle to an argument, and a conspiracy to a

* Davila, liv. 8. Sully, liv. 2. De Thou, liv. 82. Mem. du Duc de Bouillon, p. 73. Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. p. 29. Mathieu, liv. 8. p. 507.

† Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 31.

council, I wash my hands of it, and the blood which may be shed shall be on your heads."*

At this time the King of Navarre's forces were far inferior to those opposed to him, and he considered it necessary to prolong the contest and avoid a general engagement. He selected the flower of his army to make a flying camp of two thousand musqueteers, three hundred cavalry, and a few of the nobility: the rest he placed in different towns, and by his activity and courage he effected such operations that the catholic army was paralysed. Navarre being well acquainted with the country, surprised detachments, intercepted convoys, and kept his adversaries in continual alarm. Mayenne in the meantime found his army thinning by sickness and desertion; and the siege of St. Jean d'Angely, which he had resolved upon, was obliged to be abandoned.†

The Prince of Condé returned to Rochelle in February, 1586, and the affairs of the Huguenots resumed a smiling aspect. Several places in that quarter were taken by Condé's captains; among others the Isle of Oleron, in which D'Aubigné distinguished himself. But the glory he obtained in taking the island was very soon eclipsed by the brave defence which was directed by him. In the beginning of April, St. Luc, governor of Brouage, attacked him with five thousand men, assisted by some ships of war; a most obstinate struggle was maintained for twenty-four hours, in which the assailants were driven out of the town after they had succeeded in effecting a lodgement. St. Luc was at last obliged

* Mem. de M. Duplessis, vol. i. p. 586. It was dated Montauban, 1st January, 1586.

† Davila, liv. 8. p. 295 et 8.

to retire with the loss of four hundred men and a great part of his baggage.*

St. Luc's forces being divided on account of this expedition, the Prince of Condé availed himself of the opportunity to attack one division, commanded by a gentleman named Tiercelin. Condé fell in with him near Saintes,† and an engagement ensued, which ended in favour of the Huguenots. But their victory was dearly purchased; many of their captains being wounded, and two of them mortally, the sons of the late Andelot; another son had lately died at St. Jean d'Angely, and their elder brother, the Count de Laval, was so afflicted that he died of grief within eight days.‡

The King in the meantime was anxious that the war should be finished. He was unable to prosecute it for want of means; and it was out of his power to stem the torrent of faction which had forced him into hostilities. The clergy, encouraged by the Pope's nuncio, had importuned him to publish the decrees of the Council of Trent; but having obtained a bull from the Pope to sell some church property, (most probably granted in the hope of gaining his consent to the other measure), they raised such a violent opposition to his making use of it, that he was obliged to have recourse to Bursal edicts.§

A fresh difficulty was impending over Henry; the protestant states of Germany were preparing to send relief to their brethren in France. Navarre had

* Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 15.

† 7th April, 1586.

‡ Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 173. Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. Davila, liv. 8. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 16.

§ Journal de Henri III. vol. i. pp. 80 et 83.

sent agents to intreat the different provinces to take into consideration the persecuted condition of the Huguenots, and their extreme danger at the close of 1585, had aroused the zeal of Beza, who, although advanced in years, traversed Germany, and with powerful eloquence addressed all classes in behalf of the suffering Calvinists. His preaching excited great feelings, and a sort of crusade was prepared.*

But the German princes being on terms of friendship with the King of France, considered it necessary, before they marched any troops into his dominions, to send an embassy to make complaints of, and claim satisfaction for, the breach of promises made in favour of the protestants ; and to entreat his majesty to restore tranquillity to that persecuted people. Great preparations were made to add splendour to their mission ; but when they arrived in Paris they had the mortification of finding that the King had gone to the south of France.† It is thought that his sole object in going from the capital at such a time was to avoid receiving these ambassadors ; nor could he fix any time for his certain return, as he had engaged his mother to confer with the King of Navarre upon a plan which appeared to his refined and scheming policy to offer a sure way to save the government and crush the league. This plan consisted in forming a private treaty with Navarre, who should renounce his religion, be divorced from his wife, and marry the daughter of the Duke of Lorrain ; his title as presumptive heir to the crown was then to be publicly recognised ; and the nation being biassed in favour of the direct succession would

* Davila, liv. 8. p. 307.

• Cayet, liv. 1. p. 28. Davila, liv. 8. p. 380.

be easily drawn away from the league to full obedience.* Catherine undertook the commission, relying upon her usual method of intriguing. The weight of years did not prevent her from making so long a journey, but no sooner was her departure known than Henry was beset by the league upon the subject of her mission. He assured them that the negociation was only a manœuvre to delay the arrival of the Germans, and that it would in the end prove beneficial to the holy union.† This declaration being made public, and the Huguenots knowing that his dissimulation was unbounded, they encouraged suspicions and apprehensions in each others minds, and the King of Navarre was thus rendered less likely to accede to his proposal.

The military operations of this interval presented nothing of importance: a desire to signalize himself beyond what the Duke of Mayenne had been able to do, made Biron resolve on besieging Maraus, a town very essential to the possession of Rochelle. This movement brought Navarre from Guyenne to reinforce that place and strengthen the fortifications; in doing which he personally joined in the work to encourage his followers. Biron was roughly handled when he commenced his attack, and was wounded by a musket ball, which carried off one of his fingers; he afterwards found that the place was likely to offer a long defence, and carried on his plan of attack with more coolness; before the siege could be concluded, the Abbé Guadagne arrived from the court with orders to suspend hostilities preparatory to the conference between the Queen Mother and the King of Navarre. Biron agreed to withdraw his troops

* Davila, liv. 8. p. 311.

† Ibid. 315.

beyond the Charente, and Navarre promised to meet her majesty as soon as he had settled affairs in Rochelle.*

The ambassadors were indignant at being detained so long, and two of them quitted Paris. Couriers were continually sent to the King, entreating him to return and give them an audience; but he delayed as long as possible, in hopes of receiving a favourable account of his mother's conference with Navarre. At last he was induced to come back by the intelligence that the whole body had resolved on following the example of their companions: he arrived at St. Germain's in the beginning of September, and gave the long expected audience. Henry's manner of receiving the deputation sufficiently evinced his displeasure with their mission. He expressed his surprise at such interference with his government, and told them they need wait no longer, for he should give them no other answer.† This insult offered to their deputies, excited the indignation of the German princes.‡

The King returned to Paris the following day: his cool reception of the ambassadors was generally known, as well as his continued preparations for carrying on the war; still he had the mortification to find the popular feeling more furious than ever against him. The pulpits resounded with abuse; and the leaguers had circulated a report that he favoured Navarre and the Huguenots. It was said, that he endeavoured, in secret, to secure the suc-

* Davila, liv. 8. p. 312. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 31. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 20. et Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 53. The siege of Marans lasted from 1st June to 4th August, 1586.

† Davila, liv. 8. p. 321.

‡ Mem. de Nevers, vol. ii. p. 38.

cession to the crown for one, and full liberty of worship for the other.* An additional cause of discontent was to be traced to the Duke of Mayenne, who having failed to answer the great expectations which had been entertained of him and his army, was desirous of saving his reputation in any way. He loudly complained of having been deserted, betrayed, and prevented from destroying the Huguenots of Guyenne; which he declared he should certainly have done, if he had been properly seconded, and supplied with provisions and ammunition. The leaguers repeated these complaints, and called upon the King to dismiss Biron, who was not sufficiently zealous in the cause.

A new faction arose in the midst of these complaints: it was called the League of the *Sixteen*, and while it fully co-operated in all the plans of the original league, it pushed its audacity in Paris to an inconceivable point. It was composed of the most violent leaguers of the middle and lower classes, and originated with a shopkeeper named Rocheblond, who being carried away by a blind zeal for religion, proposed to form an association in Paris, to prevent the King of Navarre from succeeding to the crown. Upon communicating his plan to some ecclesiastics, he was soon joined by Prevost, curate of St. Severin, and Boucher, curate of St. Benedict; the latter of whom became the most conspicuous and furious of all the leaguers. They then added to their numbers several attorneys, and persons of intelligence and activity; the most celebrated of whom was Bussy-le-Clerc, who distinguished himself afterwards as governor of the Bastille. They were called the *Sixteen*,

* Mem. de Nevers, vol. ii. p. 322.

on account of their confederacy being managed by that number of persons, one of whom superintended each of the sixteen divisions of Paris.* The faction had worked undeclared for some time, having been established at the beginning of 1585; and when it was organised, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Bourbon were apprised of the powerful auxiliary which had arisen for them. But the King was informed of the movements of the Sixteen: one Nicholas Poulain had been introduced to their meetings, and revealed every thing to the Chancellor Chiverny, who communicated the intelligence to the monarch. He contented himself however with placing troops in the arsenal, the Bastille, and other places; and suffered the conspirators to continue their meetings without making any attempt to arrest the leaders, although he was aware that they had more than once deliberated upon an attempt to assassinate him.† Henry's conduct is inexplicable; and he appears to have wanted firmness on every occasion, except when he displayed a hatred of the protestants; then, and then only, he was decided and vigorous.

An original letter, in the hand writing of Henry III. has been preserved; it is addressed to Hillier, governor of Bayonne, and proves that the King was by no means inattentive to public affairs.‡ After advert- ing to other matters, he says, “ I have heard that the bishop of my town of Bayonne has recently procured a list of all the inhabitants of that place, by means of

* Cayet, liv. 1. p. 12.

† Procès verbal of Nicolas Poulain, et Davila, liv. 8.

‡ The letter, dated 23rd of May, 1586, is in the possession of Prince Polignac, a descendant of Hillier's. I am not aware that it has ever been printed; and am obliged to the Marquis de Fortia for the use of a MS. copy of it.

the priests whom he has chosen for the Easter confessions; and has particularly inquired of these of the new opinions; what they thought of the success of the affairs of my kingdom, in the event of my decease, representing to them the doubtful condition of the state, &c. &c. And as such discourses cannot but appear suspicious to me, not knowing by whom the said Bishop of Bayonne is so prompted, I beg you to ascertain of him if he has held such language, for such *curiosities* are of dangerous and pernicious consequence; and I find it very strange that this conduct of the bishop has been communicated to me by another than yourself." We have not the contents of Hillier's reply; but Poulain's notice combined with the information which had reached him from Bayonne, was quite sufficient to have roused the King to activity, yet he contented himself with preparing against a surprise, when he should have displayed his authority and crushed the spirit of rebellion,

Still the placing of troops in the places intended to be the first objects of their operations, confounded the conspirators, and prevented them from taking any measures at that time. Mayenne, who was to have superintended their operations, was anxious to retire from Paris; and Henry permitted him to have an audience previous to his departure, when he rallied him in a manner that shewed he was fully aware of his connexion with the conspirators; Mayenne notwithstanding assured them of his resolution to support them.*

It is probable that if Catherine had been at Paris at this juncture, she would have recommended some measure which would have awed the league; but she

* *Esprit de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 310.

was occupied during the remainder of the year in arranging conferences with the King of Navarre, and using all her influence to bring him back to the church of Rome. A considerable time was taken up in deciding where they should meet, and how each party should be attended. The castle of St. Bris, near Cognac, was at last agreed upon: Catherine went there attended by Montpensier, Nevers, and Biron; Navarre was accompanied by Condé, Turenne, and several chiefs of his party.* The Queen Mother soon discovered that her influence was no longer so irresistible, and in vain had she taken with her a train of lovely young women;† the princes had been so often deceived, that they stood firm to their proposal of a national council; and the recollection of the deceptions practised prior to the St. Bartholomew made them constantly on their guard, not only as to any treaty they might conclude, but also for their personal safety. Cayet informs us "that they would never all three enter the Queen's apartment at once; when Navarre was there, the Prince, and Turenne kept guard at the door."‡ Turenne is also stated to have said to her; "It is no longer possible, madam, for us to be satisfied with your bare promise, when your most solemn edicts have been violated.§

Catherine, without consulting the King of

* 14th. December, 1586.

† Catherine tired of importuning the King of Navarre, said to him, "What is it that you would have?" He looked round on the young ladies, and said, "Nothing, madam, that I see here."—*Peregrine*, p. 56.

‡ Cayet, liv. 1. p. 32.

§ *Lettre d'un Gentilhomme François à un sien ami à Rome, contenant le discours du voyage de la Reine, Mere. du Roi.* This piece is inserted in vol. ii. of *Mem. de la Ligue*.

Navarre, had published a truce; he considered it a scheme for stopping the march of the Germans who were coming to join him, and insisted on the publication being revoked, as an indispensable condition of continuing the conference. The Queen's advisers were at a loss what to recommend, and appeared astonished; but she being always ready to consent to any barbarity in furtherance of her plans, told them to send some musketeers from Niort, to attack and destroy two Huguenot regiments at Maillozais. "Go, and cut them in pieces," said she, "and the truce is at an end without further trouble." Her cruel orders were instantly obeyed; many of the Huguenots perished, and the rest were made prisoners.*

At length the conference commenced; the Queen declared her regret at Navarre's obstinacy in refusing to change his religion, and absenting himself from court, by which he compelled the King to wage war against him. The King of Navarre complained that notwithstanding he fully obeyed the King's orders, and scrupulously attended to the edicts, the King had broken the peace out of compliance to the Guises, and other enemies of the public tranquillity. He complained of the King's bad faith towards him, in ordering him to remain quiet, while he suffered the league to make advances; shewing that he had hazarded his life by not taking arms sooner, and that in order to satisfy those who wished to reduce him to extremities, he had neglected to look after his own preservation. "Madam," said he to the Queen with emphasis, "you can only

* Brantome, vol. i. p. 66. D'Aubigné. vol. iii. p. 24.

accuse me of too much fidelity.* The proposal for a divorce from Margaret, and a marriage with the Duke of Lorraine's daughter was developed in a second conference. But an offer of marriage from Catherine de Medicis was ominous for the Huguenot Prince. He requested two days to consider of it, and his reflexions only made him more resolved to refuse the offer. He felt besides a great reluctance to have the appearance of frequently changing his religious opinions, and could not have deserted the protestants at such a time without disgrace.†

The conference was afterwards renewed at Fontenay, when Catherine declared that the King would make no peace nor treaty with him unless he became a catholic. Navarre made his invariable reply, that he would submit to the decision of a council freely chosen. The Queen argued that the change would make his condition more secure, more free, and more suitable to his rank; as he would then enjoy the King's favour, which would be better than staying at Rochelle where he could not do as he wished. To which he answered that no private gratification, nor even the possession of thirty crowns, should make him disgracefully renounce a religion which he had followed thirty years; and that as to Rochelle, he could do what he would there, because he desired nothing but what was right.‡ Their conversation was very protracted; the Queen would not consent to a treaty of peace

* D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 23. Davila, liv. 8. Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. p. 33. et Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 80.

† Davila, liv. 8. p. 341.

‡ Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. p. 34. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 23. Le Grain, liv. 4. p. 149. Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 81.

unless Navarre promised his abjuration ; the King of Navarre wished for nothing which would not ensure the settlement of the affair by a council. She would not consent even to a truce, unless he countermanded the approach of the Germans ; while he would not yield that point, unless he was sure that the truce would produce a peace.* The Queen at last lost all patience, and said with an imperious tone, that no further deliberation was necessary, for the King who wished to be absolute master in his kingdom, was also determined that there should be only one religion in France. Upon this Turenne said with a smile of contempt—“ Well Madam, we are quite agreeable, provided it be ours ; otherwise we will fight hard for it.” And without waiting any reply, he made a profound bow and retired.†

The conference had been kept open on account of the uncertainty and indecision of the Queen Mother : she would not make a concession unnecessarily, for fear of offending the league ; and therefore wished to appear forced to accept the terms under discussion. The intelligence which she received was besides very contradictory ; and she was alternately alarmed by the success of the Huguenot party, and cheered by accounts of their desperate situation. Her wishes inclined her to place more reliance on the latter version, and she encouraged the hope of concluding a peace which would satisfy the King.‡

Catherine then made haste back to Paris, where

* Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. p. 34.

† Cayet, liv. 1. p. 32.

‡ Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. pp. 82, et seq.

her son had great need of her assistance; for in addition to the conspiracy which had lately been brought to light, the Cardinal Pellevé was discovered to have so injured the King, by his representations to the Pope, that Henry confiscated all his property;* but notwithstanding the distressed state of his treasury, he is said to have given the value to the poor, instead of applying it to carrying on the war; a proof alike of the sincerity of his devotion, and of his complete unfitness to govern a nation.

While the negociations had been carried on between the Queen Mother and the King of Navarre, the Duke of Epernon, assisted by Crillon, had been engaged in subduing the Huguenots of Provence, under Lesdiguières. Seyne, a town placed in an almost inaccessible situation on the frontier of Dauphiné, was taken in September, 1586; the garrison of La Breole offered a long resistance, and capitulated in November; and the town of Tarascon declared for the King without sustaining any attack.†

The court passed away the winter in balls, routs and maquerades, in which the King cheerfully participated; his time being divided between such amusements and the ceremonials of the different monastic orders under his protection. It was with regret he found himself forced, as the spring advanced, to prepare for carrying on the war with vigour. The Germans were about to join the King of Navarre, and it was absolutely necessary that something should be done to prevent such an occurrence.

* *Journal de Henri III.* vol. i. p. 87.

† *Vie de Crillon*, vol. i. p. 306—321.

The league in the meantime had endeavoured to persuade the King that his honour and welfare depended on his heartily joining the league, as the only means of suppressing the Huguenot party, and saving his kingdom from being a prey to foreigners. The Queen's letters in December, which announced Navarre's obstinacy, had raised his angry feelings ; and on the first day of the new year, having an assembly of the knights of the Holy Ghost, he publicly made a solemn oath that he would never suffer in his dominions any other religion than the Roman.* But all this fervour of bigotry availed him nothing : his oaths and promises had been so prostituted, that the catholics placed no reliance on him ; while the Huguenots were only the more convinced that their case would be desperate, unless they were successful in the field.

In the month of May, 1587, Guise met the King at Meaux ; when he made a long complaint of the infractions of the treaty of Nemours. He said that the resolution to make war against the heretics had been so feebly acted upon that it was not at all surprising the result should be fatal to France ; in spite of the edict, the heretics had been allowed to remain in their houses, and enjoy their property in quietness ; and instead of confiscating their goods, those of the Cardinal Pellevé had been seized for having virtuously defended in the consistory the justice of the catholics taking arms against the heretics.†

Henry answered these complaints, by observations which seem to indicate a better understanding than he has the reputation of having possessed, and by shew-

* Davila, liv. 8. p. 346. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 35.

† Cayet, liv. 1. p. 36.

ing the numerous cases in which the leaguers had violated the treaty to their advantage. This unfortunate King was in a great dilemma ; nothing could reconcile Navarre and Guise ; if he granted suitable terms to the Huguenots, he feared the resentment and violence of the league ; and if he made war against the King of Navarre, he dreaded the invasion of fifty thousand foreigners. He entreated Guise to think of peace, and to join in preserving the country from a common enemy. Guise, however, was decided upon a war, and boldly told the King that he would not consent to a peace before the religion was secured from danger.* His real motives are clearly represented in an intercepted letter from the Duchess of Lorrain : “ Go on,” says she, “ for there never was a finer opportunity for your placing the crown on your own head.”†

Finding he could not avoid carrying on the war, the King resolved to take measures for assailing the league as well as the protestants. He therefore sent a strong army into Poictou, under Joyeuse, who would be able by that means to bear down all before him : a second army was sent under Guise against the Germans which being composed of inexperienced troops, would probably suffer a defeat and allow them to advance ; the third, as a reserve, he proposed to keep near himself, to be able to oppose the Germans, who would endeavour to join Navarre after having defeated the Duke of Guise. This scheme was calculated to give him such an advantage over both parties, that he expected to be able

* Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. p. 37. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 61.

† Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 213.

to dictate his own terms. His plan was frustrated by the valour of Navarre and Guise respectively, and the war of the *three Henri*s produced results very different to what had been expected.

Joyeuse began his expedition by taking La Motte,* the garrison of which place was too weak to defend it; but by an extraordinary display of bravery, they maintained the town much longer than could have been expected. At last, under the pressure of famine, they were induced to rely on the promises of the Duke, who had the barbarity to murder the whole of them in cold blood. What renders this cruelty more revolting is, that when D'Aubigné was employed to convey some communication to Joyeuse, he asked what inducement the catholics could have had to act so inhumanly? The answer he received was, "that it was the only way to gain applause from the pulpits of Paris."†

The King of Navarre recommenced the campaign early, and was tolerably successful in his enterprises. The summer passed away without any event of importance; news arrived in September of the Germans having entered France by Lorrain. The King of Navarre marched in that direction to meet them; and Joyeuse, determined to arrest his passage, attacked him at Courtras, in Perigord, on the twentieth of October.‡

The two armies exhibited a remarkable contrast; that of Joyeuse consisted of many young nobility, and a considerable number of volunteers; their accoutre-

* La Motte-Achard, in Poictou. (Vendée.)

† D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 44.

‡ Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 239.

ments, all new, were elegantly ornamented with plumes and gold; and their horses were of the finest kind, and in good condition; they were armed moreover with the strength of the King's name and authority, but although animated with great spirit, they were very much in want of experience. Navarre's army, on the contrary, was clad in plain armour which had grown rusty in repeated campaigns; his men, however, were the veterans who had fought at Montcontour and Jarnac.* The catholic force consisted of five thousand infantry, and about two thousand five hundred cavalry; the Huguenots had about four thousand infantry, and between twelve and thirteen hundred horsemen. This difference of numbers was trifling compared with all the previous battles in these wars; but if Joyeuse had consented to delay the battle till Marshal Matignon's arrival with his army, it would have been scarcely possible for the King of Navarre to have escaped destruction. The Marshal had sent word to Joyeuse, requesting him to post himself at Courtras and wait his arrival.† The King of Navarre, however, had already taken that position, and the two armies were so situated that a battle could not well be avoided.

Joyeuse, however, could not be restrained from attacking the Huguenots. He had learned that he was declining rapidly in his master's favour; and wished to do something which would preserve him from disgrace. Henry had told him publicly that he was considered a coward by the court, and that he would have some difficulty in removing that impres-

* Perefice, p. 61. Davila, liv. 8.

† Brantome, vol. ix. p. 168.

sion.* No wonder then, that he should wish so ardently for battle; and he informed the King that he should soon present his majesty with the heads of Navarre and Condé. His sanguine disposition made him feel certain of a victory, and when he found the King of Navarre was posted between the rivers Ile and Drogne, he said to his officers—"We hold the enemy so shut in by these rivers, that it is impossible for him to escape us; let every thing then be ready for attacking him to-morrow at break of day."† He gave orders that no quarter should be given to any of the enemy, and that death should be the punishment for saving the life of a Huguenot, even if it should be the King of Navarre.‡

Navarre prepared to receive him; for although it was hazardous to fight where a retreat was impracticable in case of defeat, it was still more so to give time for Matignon's arrival. He arranged the divisions of his army; and after communicating his plan to Condé, Turenne, and the Count de Soissons, he addressed all around him upon the calamities inseparable from civil war. After recapitulating his various endeavours to preserve peace, he exclaimed with an animated voice—"Perish the authors of this war, and may the blood which is going to be shed be upon their heads." He then called upon Condé, and Soissons, his cousins, to shew themselves worthy of their relationship to him.§

When the King of Navarre had finished his address, Duplessis Mornay stepped forward, and in a solemn manner reminded that prince of the great injury he had done to the protestant religion by his

* Davila, liv. 8. p. 361.

† Davila, liv. 8. p. 389.

‡ D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 48.

§ Perefixe et Mathieu.

flagrant incontinence ; and particularly to the family which he had afflicted by the seduction of a young lady of Rochelle. Mornay advised him to make public reparation for that misconduct, lest his army should be defeated as a judgment upon him.* Henry may have felt influenced by religious apprehensions, which the appeal of Mornay had excited ; but it is probable that he considered the ardour of his soldiers would be still more animated, if their minds were freed from any stigma on their cause ; he consented to make a public avowal of his fault in the church of Pons, and to do the same the first time he should be at Rochelle. Henry afterwards knelt down beside the Minister Chaudieu, who offered a prayer for Divine help ; and the whole army immediately did the same. This spectacle, instead of raising suitable feelings in the mind of Joyeuse, only added to his confidence : he exultingly called out—“ See how they tremble ! The day is ours ! ” Laverdin his lieutenant observed to him that he was mistaken in the men, who always went to prayer when they had made up their minds to conquer or to die.†

The battle began about nine o'clock with a cannonading on both sides. Navarre's artillery created great confusion among his opponents ; while their's being badly directed, had hardly any effect. Laverdin perceived that no time was to be lost in coming to close quarters, as the only means of avoiding the effects of the inferiority of their gunners. He immediately gave the signal for advancing to the charge. The shock was very violent, but the victory was soon decided ; and in less than an hour, the bri-

* Vie de Duplessis Mornay, liv. 1. p. 108.

† Journal de Henri III. Mathieu, P. Daniel, et D'Aubigné.

liant army of the catholics was completely routed. Joyeuse himself was killed; not in the fight, but after he was taken prisoner; the person who shot him declared, that it was done to revenge his cruelty at La Motte. The catholics lost three thousand men, including many persons of distinction: the loss of the Huguenots was trifling, not more than two hundred of them being killed, and very few wounded.* The cannon, baggage, &c. as a natural consequence of such a rout, fell into the hands of the King of Navarre, who is admitted by writers of every party to have added splendour to his victory by his clemency to the vanquished. He set at liberty nearly all his prisoners, and returned to several their arms and standards.† But his moderation had no effect upon his enemies, who at first treated the affair as an insignificant skirmish; and when the truth was made known, the court, disappointed in the hope of crushing the King of Navarre, looked forward to retrieve the misfortune by successful operations in other parts.

* Davila liv. 8. p. 394. Cayet vol. i. p. 38. Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 303. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. pp. 56-57.

† Mem de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 243.

CHAR. XXXVIII.

TUMULT AT ST. SEVERIN ;—DEFEAT OF THE GERMANS AT VIMORY AND AUNEAU ;—INCREASED INSOLENCE OF THE LEAGUE ;—MEETING AT NANCY ;—DEATH OF CONDE ;—THE BARRICADES.

THE only result of the battle of Courtras, was the preservation of the Huguenot party from destruction, by placing the Bourbon family in safety. Different reasons have been assigned for Navarre's measures after the battle ; he had a choice of two plans ; to march at once to meet the Germans, or to make himself master of Poictou and Saintonge. He adopted the latter line of action, and then set out for Bearne, with a small body of cavalry, leaving Turenne with the command of his forces. Some writers accuse Navarre of omitting to pursue his advantage, through his desire to visit his mistress, the Countess of Guiche ;* another opinion is, that he wished to avoid an irremediable rupture with Henry III. being desirous of keeping open a chance of his return to court, which was so essential to his ultimately succeeding to the crown :† while a third, and perhaps the real reason is, that the Huguenot army was considerably diminished after the battle, by a great number of persons returning to their houses. Na-

* Vie de Mornay, p. 111. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 58.

† Perefixe.

varre obtained their promise to meet him again, on the twentieth of November, to join the Germans; but circumstances occurred in the interval which disappointed his hopes in that quarter.*

The German army, consisting of nearly forty thousand men, with twenty pieces of artillery, had entered Lorrain under the command of the Baron Donauor d'Othna, a Prussian; he was aided by the Duke of Bouillon, his brother the Count de la Mark, and the Count de Chatillon, son of the late Admiral.† The Duke of Guise had not received the reinforcements which the King had promised him when at Meaux, but still he hovered about the enemy, and was so unwearyed in his attacks upon their flanks, that his operations caused great astonishment.

Great dissatisfaction soon pervaded the foreign army; they had calculated on being met on their arrival by the King of Navarre, or the Prince of Condé; they were only joined from time to time by small parties of Huguenots, who added to their dissatisfaction by relating the difficulties they had overcome in reaching them; while hunger, forced marches, and the continual loss of some of their baggage, made their situation very distressing.

Henry's plan had been to remain quiet till the Reitres should have advanced to a certain point; but

* Sully, in the 3rd book of his Memoirs, accuses the Count de Soissons of fanning Henry's passion for his mistress, with the intention of keeping him back from pursuing his advantage. He treacherously aimed at supplanting the King of Navarre in his possessions, by marrying the princess his sister; the league then appeared certain of succeeding, and from their hatred of Navarre, the count imagined he could easily effect his object. Sully also charges Condé with a design of disincumbering France, and establishing an independant sovereignty.

† Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 212.

the clamours of the league compelled him to march to Guise's help. The clergy carried their insolence beyond all bounds; and, on one occasion, a sermon preached at the church of St. Severin contained such abuse of the King, that the preacher was sent for to the Louvre. Immediately a report was spread that all the preachers were to be arrested, and Bussy-le-Clerc armed a company of leaguers, and placed them in ambuscade near the church, to prevent the individual from being taken.* When the authorities arrived they were not allowed to enter, and the civil officer sent for help to force his way in. The whole quarter was in a tumult, and the officers were unable to execute their orders. The Duke of Epernon and the Chancellor recommended the King to send a strong force and make Le-Clerc and his party prisoners; but others dissuaded him from doing so; and Villequier having given Le-Clerc information of what had been proposed, he and his friends concealed themselves for a time; but though their plans were carried on in secret, they never lost sight of the objects which had been proposed by the Sixteen.†

After a painful march, the Germans arrived before La Charité on the 15th of October. The fruits of France, in which they had indulged, had introduced diseases among them, and, to complete their disasters, they found the King had come in person to oppose them with a strong force. They were unable to take La Charité, and returned towards Montargis, taking up their quarters at Vimory. It was the King's army evidently that prevented the progress of the fo-

* 3rd Sept. 1587. De Thou, liv. 87, et Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 210.

† Proces verbal De Nicolas Poulain, p. 152. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 43.

reigners; and Guise, by allowing them to pass the frontier, had committed an unpardonable error: but the league could see no fault in their champion; they not only became more insolent than ever to their sovereign, but were actually taking measures for seizing his person in the camp.

The leaguers consulted upon taking possession of Paris during the King's absence; and Guise had informed them, that he would seize the King himself in the country. Those in Paris waited to ascertain the result of Guise's attempt, and sent several couriers to Estampes, where he then lodged, to ascertain if it had succeeded. But Guise did not consider the undertaking safe, on account of the strong force in the neighbourhood; and he put off the design, to the great regret of the Sixteen.*

Guise was at dinner, with the different princes of his family, when he received information that some of the Germans were at Vimory. He mused for a few minutes, then gave orders to sound to arms, and desired that the troops should be ready to march within an hour.† The Duke of Mayenne asking for what object he gave those orders, Guise answered, "To attack the enemy." But as the disproportion between his force and theirs was so great, he could scarcely believe his brother was serious. They arrived at Vimory at midnight, when Guise entered the town secretly with a select corps, the other chiefs remaining around to make prisoners of those who should attempt to escape. Every thing being ready, they set fire to several houses, and shot all who came out on hearing the noise. Scarcely any of the Germans could escape. The Baron Donau, their com-

* Proces verbal, &c. p. 152.

† 26th Oct. 1587.

mander, being at the opposite end of the town, took horse with a hundred followers and got into the adjoining plain. Mayenne was there and prepared to charge upon him. Donau received the charge with firmness, and springing forward, he attacked Mayenne himself; he discharged a pistol in his face which stunned him, but the strength of Mayenne's vizor protected him from harm. The Baron Donau continued the fight some time, but his followers being nearly all killed, he availed himself of the darkness to cut his way through the opposing squadron, accompanied by no more than fourteen companions. The slaughter in the town was dreadful; and the catholics returned loaded with plunder; but the Reitres fought so well, that above two hundred of their assailants were killed, above forty of whom were gentlemen of distinction.*

This event threw the Germans into great dismay, and their Swiss companions sent an offer of submission to the King; but about the same time the Prince of Conty arrived with news of the victory at Courtras,† and by his exhortations and entreaties they were persuaded to wait for intelligence from the King of Navarre before they made any agreement with the King of France. The Prince of Conty's arrival made them forget their past difficulties; they took up their head quarters at Auneau, in the Orleannois, and indulged themselves in the good cheer

* Davila, liv. 8. pp. 398 et 402. Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 219. Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. p. 42.

† This is Davila's version; but in the Memoires de la Ligue, it is said that the news was brought by a messenger who had been sent on purpose by the Count de Chatillon; and also that the Prince of Conty arrived at the camp on the 20th of November. Vol. ii. p. 225.

which that province afforded.* The object of the chiefs of this army was to pass beyond the Loire, and several of them wished to proceed at once, but unfortunately their departure was put off till the twenty-fourth of November, and they experienced a second disaster in consequence. This event was the more vexatious as the Duke of Guise came up with them on that very day, by means of a forced march.† He attacked Auneau in the same manner as Vimory; but on this occasion he publicly performed his devotions, and left instructions for prayers to be said for the success of his enterprise. He was indeed so determined not to fail for want of a sufficiency of religious exercise that he ordered three masses to be performed during the night; “a thing,” says Maimbourg, “which is contrary to the regulations of the church of Rome, except on Christmas-eve; but the good priests, who were not then so well informed as they are now, devoutly obeyed him without any scruple.”‡

The town surprised in the night, fell an easy prey, and the assailants committed great havoc, with scarcely the loss of a man. Excepting the Baron Donau, and about ten others, none that were in the town escaped. The other divisions of the army that were placed in the neighbourhood rallied at the distance of a league. Donau urged the chiefs to return to Auneau and attack the catholics, who being intent upon their plunder would be an easy prey. But his exhortations were in vain; the Swiss separated from the Germans, and having accepted the terms offered by the King, they set out for their

* *Davila*, liv. 8, pp. 405 et seq. † *Mem. de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 227.

‡ *Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. i. p. 295.

own country. The rest of the army was with difficulty kept from disbanding. Conty, Bouillon, and Chatillon, undertook to guarantee the payment of their arrears, and conducted them to the forest of Orleans. But the season of the year exposed them to great sufferings; and finding themselves at a distance from the King of Navarre, ill-treated by their French companions, deserted by the Swiss, beaten by the league, and pursued by the King, they met in December at Marsigni, and accepted the King's terms, which had been communicated by the Duke of Epernon.*

The French chiefs made great efforts to prevent their German friends from accepting these terms, and undertook to conduct them to the King of Navarre's army. Finding, however, that instead of listening to them, the foreigners had an intention of arresting them, to ensure the payment of what they had promised, they separated secretly, and took different routes to make their escape. The Prince of Conty went into Maine with fourteen horsemen; the Duke of Bouillon, with only five hundred horsemen, passed through the Lyonnais to Geneva, where he soon after died. Chatillon, declaring that he would surrender his standard to none but the King of Navarre set out with one hundred and twenty horsemen, and with great resolution made his way to Languedoc. Mandelot, governor of the Lyonnais, and the Count de Tournon, both opposed his passage with their armies, and the tocsin resounded in the different towns; but he cleared every difficulty, and arrived in safety at Vivarez, of which place he was governor.†

* Davila, liv. 8. Mathieu et D'Aubigné *in loc.*

† Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 236. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 67.

The unfortunate Germans, however, found that the pursuit of the royal forces was not their only misfortune; for after submitting to the Duke of Epernon, they were exposed to the attacks of the peasantry, who slew many of them as they took their road homewards. Guise complained of the terms which had been granted them; and on the ground of Epernon's having acted solely out of enmity and spite to him, he refused to observe the conditions; he followed the main body to the frontiers, making a terrible carnage among them. The Swiss shared no better fate; marching southward towards Sarry, they were attacked near the Isere by La Valette, Epernon's brother. This made them resolve on an effort to join Lesdiguières, who was at the head of the Huguenots in that part; they sustained a total defeat in Dauphiné, and with a few exceptions all perished. Lesdiguières himself was obliged to take refuge in the mountainous parts soon after.*

The King returned to Paris the twenty-third of December, and made a public entry, dressed in full armour as if he had defeated the enemy in person. The people ridiculed his pretensions to military renown, and saluted him with shouts of "Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands."† A pamphlet was also circulated at the time, which though publicly directed against the Duke of Epernon, was known to be levelled against the King himself. It was intitled, "The Achievements of the Duke of

Brantôme, *discours sur les belles retraites*. Davila, liv. 8, et Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. p. 43.

* Davila, liv. 8. p. 416. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 42.

† Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 306, et Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. p. 43.

Epernon against the Heretics;" but the title page was the whole of the work, all the other leaves being blank.* Henry found that the spirit of sedition had very much increased during his short absence from his capital. The clergy threw off all restraint, and publicly announced that the King himself had invited the foreigners to help him suppress the league.† The doctors of the Sorbonne had recently holden a meeting, when they passed a decree to sanction the dethronement of all princes who did not govern properly, on the same principle that authority might be taken from a suspected guardian.‡ But instead of resenting such behaviour in a proper manner, by punishing the authors of such a doctrine, he merely sent for Boucher the leader among the doctors of the Sorbonne, and remonstrated with him upon the impropriety of his conduct in calumniating his lawful sovereign against the precepts of Scripture. He added, that he should be justified in following the example of Pope Sixtus V. who had sent some monks to the galleys for having made allusions to him in their sermons; but that though he refrained from such severity on this occasion, he would surely punish in an exemplary manner any repetition of such seditious and wicked conduct.§

Such a line of policy only tended to encourage the insolence of the league; and from being accustomed to discuss the propriety of dethroning their King, they at last grew impatient for an opportunity. Guise's resentment was kindled at being excluded

* Brantome, vol. x. p. 326.

† Cayet, liv. 1, p. 37.

‡ 16th Dec. 1587. Journal de Henri III. vol. i. p. 95.

§ Journal de Henri III. et Hist. de la Ligue, liv. 2.

from a share in the appointments made vacant by the death of Joyeuse: he demanded the post of Admiral for Brissac; and was the more vexed at being refused, as his hated rival Epernon was invested with that office, as well as with the governments of Normandy, Angoulême and Saintonge.* Soon after, Guise and five others went in disguise to Rome, where he made himself known to no one but Cardinal Pellevè, with whom he was in communication a whole day and night; after staying there three days he returned. The nature of his business at Rome may be inferred from the circumstance of the Pope's sending him a sword, with flames represented upon it; this sword, and some other arms were sent by the hands of the Duke of Parma, who announced that Henry of Lorrain alone was intitled to bear arms for, and to be the defender of the church.†

Henry soon after learned that the Lorrain princes had convoked a meeting at Nancy at the end of January, 1588, when it was resolved to call upon the King to join the league more decidedly and openly; to dismiss all obnoxious persons from his service; to publish the council of Trent, and establish the holy inquisition, with several other clauses in unison with them.‡ He then felt pleased that the King of Navarre had gained the victory at Courtras; and regretted that he had contributed to drive away the Germans, who would faithfully have served him against a faction that now avowed an intention

* D'Aubigné, Mezeray, and others.

† Journal de Henri III. vol. i. p. 97.

‡ Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. pp. 269, et seq. De Thou, liv. 90, et Cayet, liv. 1. p. 44.

of dethroning him. And besides being now more interested in Navarre's preservation from the demonstration that he had no other barrier to oppose to the league, he was charmed with the moderation of the Huguenot prince, who being asked what terms he would require after gaining such a battle, answered—"The same I should ask after losing one, a confirmation of the edict of Poictiers, for as I took arms only upon the breach of that treaty, I shall lay them aside when it is renewed."*

Navarre had retired to Rochelle when he heard of the overthrow of the Germans; he soon after received the news of another event which was highly discouraging to his party. The Prince of Condé died on the fifth of March at St. Jean d'Angely, under the strongest suspicion of having been poisoned:† his wife was brought to trial for being accessory to the crime, and would have been condemned to death, if she had not been pregnant. Being afterwards delivered of a son, who succeeded to his father's title, the proceedings were dropped, and the King of Navarre, after his entry into Paris, ordered all the papers respecting it to be burned.‡ When he heard of the prince's death, he declared that he had lost his right hand.§ The Cardinal of Bourbon on hearing the news went to the King, and being either so far plunged in the depths of superstition

* D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 57.

† The report of the surgeons who examined his body, is in Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 305. See also De Thou, liv. 90, and the Mem. de M. Duplessis, vol. i. p. 841.

‡ Mezeray.—*Abregé Chron.* According to Davila, liv. 14, the princess was absolved by the parliament in 1595, on her promising to be a catholic, and engaging to educate her son in that religion.

§ Pérefix.

and ignorance, as to entertain such thoughts; or thinking the monarch sufficiently weak to be affected by his exhortation, he said; “See, Sire, the effects of being excommunicated; for my part, I think his death is to be attributed to nothing but the thunderbolt of excommunication which has fallen upon him.”* It is highly probable the more crafty leaguers thought, that by operating on the monarch’s fears, they should make him more subservient to the church. They found, however, by his reply that his eyes were beginning to be opened respecting them and their objects; and from that time they took measures for his dethronement.

When the plan for seizing Henry in his camp had failed through the extreme caution of the Duke of Guise, the Sixteen were only rendered more determined, and became more impatient for an opportunity. They were in constant communication with Guise, and informed him repeatedly of their being sufficiently strong to execute the enterprise; but instead of coming to Paris, he sent them a letter stating that they should wait for a good opportunity, and that when one offered he would not let it pass.† No occasion was omitted in the meantime, for publishing invectives and false accusations against the King, from the press as well as the pulpit. But the efficacy of these means was nothing compared with the advantage derived from the confessional. The confessors (many of whom were Jesuits) abused the influence of their ministry, sparing neither the King nor his adherents, and filled the minds of their penitents with alarm.

* *Journal de Henri III.* vol. i. p. 99.

† *Procès verbal de N. Poulain*, p. 153.

They urged the propriety of joining religious associations, and persuaded all they could to join the league, denying absolution to those who refused. Complaints were made of these seditious confessors, but they would not desist; they only became more circumspect, and fortified themselves with a new dogma, "that the penitent who reveals what his confessor tells him, is as bad as the confessor who reveals the communication of his penitent.*

"On the fifteenth of April, 1588," says Poulain in his declaration, "calling on Le-Clerc, he informed me, that Guise was soon coming to assist them, and that then they would fight for the catholic faith."† Bussy-le-Clerc then told Poulain, that on the first Sunday after Easter, a certain number of armed persons were to enter Paris by night, through the Porte St. Denis, the keepers of which were devoted to the league; their first care would be to kill the Duke of Epernon, who superintended the patrol of the city, and who would be sure to present himself if he heard the noise of horsemen. From thence they were to attack the Louvre, and master the King's guards: the captains in the town at the same time defending their several quarters by barricades. Le-Clerc himself was to move about with a select body, to seize strong houses and important posts. This intelligence would not allow of any delay, and Poulain demanded an audience of the King, where he gave a full account of the danger which threatened his majesty.

The King immediately sent for arms and armour to be lodged in the Louvre; and ordered a division

* De Thou, liv. 86. vol. ix. p. 652.

† Procès verbal, &c. p. 156.

of four thousand Swiss to approach the city, and take their quarters in the neighbourhood. This shewed the conspirators that they were discovered ; still they would not desist, but sent repeated letters entreating Guise to come to them. Henry was advised to act with energy, and he might have overwhelmed the faction, which then trembled with apprehension, in consequence of his being informed of their plot. A display of authority at this time would have sufficed ; but being prepossessed with an idea that without their chief the league could do nothing, he sent Bellievre to Soissons to forbid Guise coming to Paris.* While Bellievre was thus employed, the Duchess of Montpensier, Guise's sister, threw herself at the King's feet, and with tears implored his permission for her brother to come and justify himself : but at the same time she was treacherously employed in placing an ambuscade to surprise Henry on his return from Vincennes. Directly they had seized the King's person, they were to convey him to Soissons, and some of their party were to give an alarm in Paris, accusing the Huguenots of having carried off the King ; this alarm it was expected would give rise to another massacre. Poulain's information preserved his Sovereign from this danger ; the King sent into Paris for a hundred and twenty horsemen, and thus foiled the intentions of his enemies.†

Poulain, however, began to be suspected by the leaguers, of having given information to the court, as he had been met coming out of the Louvre by some of their spies. To counteract his assertions,

* *Mem de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 315.

† 5 May, 1588. *Proces verbal, &c.* p. 158.

and throw discredit on his statement, it was insinuated to the King that he was a Huguenot; while Villequier maintained that his account was all false, and that some of Guise's enemies had suborned him to say such things. Poulain offered to remain prisoner, and gave the names of several persons with whom he desired to be confronted; and that then he would make good his charges or forfeit his life.* The council took the affair into serious consideration; the Duke of Epernon left Paris for his government of Normandy to secure Rouen and Havre, and measures were taken for holding Paris in check, by the possession of the surrounding towns. This plan was adopted at the suggestion of the Queen Mother: the bold manner in which the populace had defended the Curate of St. Severin, convinced her that it would be useless to make any attempt to seize the leaders of the league in Paris, until the King had received a considerable addition to his force. She made use of an Italian proverb, “before you irritate a wasp take care to shield your face.”†

But the Duchess of Montpensier had written to her brother, that Henry meditated some design against him, and that if possible he should anticipate the movement.‡ This, added to the entreaties of the Sixteen, brought Guise to Paris; he entered by the Porte St. Denis on the afternoon of the ninth of May, and went straight to the dwelling of the Queen Mother, accompanied by seven gentlemen. Nothing can adequately describe the enthusiasm of

* Proces verbal, &c. p. 163. Davila, liv. 9. p. 434.

† Davila, liv. 9. p. 433.—*Bisogna coprirsi bene il viso, innanzi che si stuzzichi il vespaio.*

‡ Proces verbal, &c. p. 165.

the Parisians on seeing their champion once more among them. The streets resounded with shouts of “*Vive Guise! Long live the pillar of the church!*” and a young woman in the Rue St. Honoré, exclaimed in an audible voice, “Good prince! now that you are come to us we are safe.”*

Catherine received the Duke with an observation of some ambiguity, purporting, that though she was glad to receive him, she would have had more satisfaction in seeing him at another time.† The Queen had secretly desired him to come to Paris, and most probably had wished his party success, until the rebellion became too glaring: she had told Bellievre when he was sent to forbid the Duke’s coming, “unless he come, the King is in such a rage, that a great number of persons of distinction are lost.” Bellievre in consequence did not deliver the King’s commands in a sufficient peremptory manner, and Guise who was not at a loss for a pretext told him, “that he would come privately to justify his conduct to the King: for his sole aim was to serve the religion and the state; and that he would not disobey the King’s commands.” But after dismissing Bellievre with an idea that he would wait at Soissons till he again heard from the King, he ordered his horses and set out for Paris, avoiding the high roads, as he knew he should meet persons bringing orders for him to keep away.‡

The news of Guise’s arrival, and the display of the popular feeling, made Henry summon his coun-

* Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. p. 49. D’Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 73. Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 317.

† Davila, liv. 9. p. 442.

‡ Davila, liv. 9. p. 440. et Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 315.

sellors to the Louvre. The King had of late been a great deal with the Abbé d'Elbene; and he was one of the first who was consulted. The Abbé recommended strong measures: "Strike!" said he, "strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." But the dangers of such a measure were demonstrated by the other counsellors. The Queen Mother in the meantime had sent Louis Davila* to inform her son that Guise was coming with her to the Louvre. Time pressed, and some decision was necessary in consequence. The unhappy King dispatched a messenger to urge her to delay the visit as long as she could; but she was already at the gates, and further deliberation was impossible.†

Catherine was in a chair; the Duke walked by her side, and the populace crowded around them in countless multitudes. Guise was greeted as he went along, and might say, that there was hardly a man among them present who was not devoted to him; but his conscience told him he was guilty of rebellion, and a circumstance occurred on entering the Louvre, which shews he experienced some dread of incurring his sovereign's wrath. Crillon commanded the guards before whom he passed; Guise saluted that officer, but, instead of receiving from him a return in unison with his flattering reception elsewhere, a stern look was coolly fixed upon him, at which the champion of the league and the idol of the Parisians turned pale. His uneasiness was increased as he passed through a double line of Swiss soldiers; and when he found archers and gentlemen placed in every quarter of the palace. A princess is said to

* Brother of the Historian.

† Davila, liv. 9. p. 443-4.

have whispered to him, that his death was then being discussed in the cabinet.*

On entering the King's chamber, the Duke made a most respectful bow, and Henry said indignantly to him—"I sent you orders not to come to Paris." Guise, in a submissive tone, assured the King, "that he had thrown himself into his majesty's arms to demand justice, and to free himself from the calumnies of his enemies; but that, notwithstanding, he certainly would not have come if he had received more clear and positive orders from his majesty." The King turned to Bellievre to know what he had said from him, but, before he received a reply, he told Guise, "that he did not know whether he had been calumniated or not, but that his innocence would be manifest if no interruption of the public tranquillity arose out of his arrival." It required all the persuasion of the Queen Mother and the Duchess of Usez to restrain the King from inflicting vengeance on Guise; they satisfied him that the time was unfavourable for such a step, and the Duke was allowed to retire to his hotel in the Rue St. Antoine.†

The following night was occupied by both parties in consulting upon the measures to be taken; and the next day Guise visited the Queen Mother at her hotel. But he would not again trust his person to the King's vengeance, and took care to be accompanied by some resolute and trusty captains. The King was there to meet him, and the prevailing opinion in Paris was, that it was intended to have

* Davila, liv. 9. p. 444.—Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 23.

† Davila, liv. 9. p. 445. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 58.

Guise dispatched.* Whether the King did contemplate such an act or not we cannot ascertain; subsequent events shew that he was capable of that kind of revenge; and when Guise had entered the Queen's garden the door-keeper tried to close the gate directly, but St. Paul, a zealous friend of the Duke's, forced his way in, accompanied by several friends, and swore that if there was any thing to be done he would be in it.†

The King, the Queen Mother, and the Duke of Guise conversed at length, but without coming to any agreement. Henry was determined to expel from the city all those who had lately arrived from the country, and who were come solely at Guise's instigation. This measure was necessary before he could attempt to bring any of the Sixteen to justice; and notwithstanding the circumstances which had followed the arrival of the Duke of Guise, the King remained firm to his resolution.

Villequier and D'O. were charged by the King to expel the strangers from the city; they were occupied in so doing the whole of Wednesday, the eleventh of May, but to no purpose, for the leaguers concealed them in their houses. Those gentlemen informed the King, that to expel them without violence was impossible, and it was at once decided to use force. The Swiss troops were ordered into Paris, and they entered early on the morning of the twelfth.‡ Biron had the disposing of the military,

* Felibien, on the authority of *Memoires de Godefroy*, states that the King asked Alphonso Ornans Corse what he should do. He replied, that if his majesty pleased, the Duke's head should be laid at his feet. The King, however, was for different measures.—*Hist. de Paris*, vol. ii. p. 1166.

† *Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 27.

‡ *Cayet*, liv. 1. p. 47.

but the arrangements he made do not shew him to be an experienced soldier; at least not in operations of this kind, when his only point was to prevent the populace from becoming masters of the city. As he knew that Guise was the life and soul of the sedition, he should have taken possession of all the avenues to his hotel, such as the Rue St. Antoine, the Place de la Bastille, &c.; instead of which he posted bodies of men at the burying ground of the Innocents, on the different bridges, and at several markets and open places. A strong guard of gentlemen, archers, and musqueteers, was at the same time placed at the Louvre, with orders not to stir out.*

There were great numbers of persons in Paris who had been forced into the prevailing habits of sedition, but who, in their hearts, would have rejoiced to see the King succeed in mastering his enemies. Still they were angry, that in order to punish a few insolent rebels, he should fill Paris with troops, and subject them to all the dangers of a town taken by assault. The Sixteen turned such fears to their advantage, and circulated a report that the King had resolved to put to death one hundred and twenty of the most considerable catholics; and a list was made out of the intended victims, which began with Guise, and included all the preachers and deputies of the league. The troops being posted at so many points at once confirmed the fears of the people, and it was in vain they were told that the King had given orders, forbidding the least insolence to any of the inhabitants on pain of death: the alarm had gone forth, and it was impossible to allay it.

* Davila, liv. 9. pp. 454 et seq.

The tradesmen refused to open their shops, and thus added force to the panic; while the monks mounted guard in front of their convents.*

The Queen Mother wished to learn what the Duke of Guise was doing, and very early on the twelfth sent Louis Davila to pay him a visit upon some trifling pretence; and charging him to be particular in looking about him while at the Duke's hotel. On his arrival he was surprised to find the house close shut up. He was obliged to enter by a little door; and, when he got in, he found the court filled with armed gentlemen. When he had delivered the Queen's complimentary message, Guise (who was fully aware of her motive) took Davila by the hand and led him into the garden. He showed him a prodigious quantity of arms of every kind, and pointed out to him a number of places full of soldiers. They parted very civilly, and Davila went back to the Louvre to make his report.

By that time the whole city was in ferment, and it was clear that instructions had been circulated to regulate the proceedings. Orders were sent to march some troops to the Place Maubert, where some people had assembled. Crillon commanded the detachment employed, but he was compelled to retire. The moment was too late to be effectual; for Bois-Dauphin, with a number of young men from the university, and the boatmen from the river, had thrown up a complete defence. Chains were placed across the streets, and the different approaches were blocked up with large pieces of timber, the stones of the pavement, and casks filled with rubbish. As Crillon was returning, he found himself shut in by a body of men

* Davila, liv. 9. Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. p. 50. Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 334.

under Brissac, who was the most active person on the occasion. The alarm bells were rung; cries of *to arms* resounded; the barricades were made in every direction, even up to the entrance of the Louvre; and in a short time the King's troops, who were brought into Paris to suppress the revolt, were all prisoners of the mob; the word was given to fall upon the Swiss, and a terrible butchery ensued.*

Brissac exerted his influence to save a considerable number who had thrown down their arms and called for quarter; he led them to the Marché Neuf, where they remained his prisoners. He had been very much incensed against the King, who had said of him that he was fit for nothing by sea or by land; and, in addition to his insult, he had refused to make him admiral. When therefore he surveyed the barricades, which he had first suggested, and saw the King's troops in his hands, he exclaimed with exultation—"The King shall know to-day that I have an element, and that if I am good for nothing by land or by sea, I can do something on the pavement."†

Until the success of the barricades was certain, Guise remained in his hotel, with every thing arranged for assisting his flight, if it should be necessary. When, however, it was ascertained that the only chance of safety for the King was in an obstinate defence of the Louvre, he sallied forth on horseback, and rode from quarter to quarter, recommending the people to act only on the defensive, and to rely upon him. Persons had called upon him earlier in the day to stop the tumultuous proceedings; he coolly answered,

* Davila, liv. 9, et Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 310. et seq.

† D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 74.

that it was beyond his power to restrain them, as they were like wild bulls broken loose, and that those alone were to blame who had called in the military.* He afterwards set at liberty the Swiss. It is probable that he anticipated a more favourable result from negociation than could be expected from pushing his advantage. It was his interest for the present to have Henry in his power, rather than to dethrone him altogether; and until the Bourbons were formally declared incapable of succeeding to the throne, it was not the interest of the Guises to attempt his life.

The people of Paris at this time were very angry with the Queen of England, for having executed Mary Queen of Scots; and Guise pretending that they contemplated an attack on the English ambassador, sent Brissac to his house with the offer of a guard. The ambassador, in thanking Guise, refused to have any protection beside that of the King. Brissac then asked the ambassador if he had arms to defend himself with? The question was deemed such as could not be put to an ambassador, and no answer was given; but afterwards being asked as a friend, he said that he had none, except the public faith and the law of nations. Brissac urged him to fasten his doors, but was told, that an ambassador's house should be always open.† The Duke of Guise was anxious that a favourable account of the affair should be sent to England, and was desirous of ap-

* Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 2. p. 51. Davila, liv. 9. p. 461.

† Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 322. De Thou, liv. 90, et Mathieu, liv. 8. p. 549. It appears from the records of the state paper office, that Sir Edward Stafford was ambassador at Paris from 1583 to 1589.

pearing to protect the ambassador; and if he could not hope for support from the Queen of England, he might succeed in persuading her to remain neutral.

CHAP. XXXIX.

FLIGHT OF HENRY III. FROM PARIS;—DEPUTATIONS TO CHARTRES;—EDICT OF UNION;—ATTACK ON THE DUKE OF EPERNON;—STATES-GENERAL OF BLOIS;—DEATH OF THE DUKE AND CARDINAL OF GUISE.

As usual, the settlement of the dispute was left to the Queen Mother, who went to Guise's hotel on the afternoon of the day of the barricades. The leaguers would not allow their defences to be removed for her coach, and she was compelled to go in a chair; and so great was the difficulty in passing, that two hours were occupied in going to the hotel.* Guise dictated the most humiliating terms to the unhappy King: he demanded for himself the post of lieutenant-general, with the same authority which his father had possessed under Francis II; in return for which he undertook to give so good an account of the Huguenots, that very soon the catholic should be the only religion in all the kingdom; he asked for a number of places of security, and funds to pay their garrisons; the Bourbon princes were to be declared incapable of succeeding to the crown; Epernon, D'O., Biron, and several

* Davila, liv. 9. p. 464.

others to be dismissed from their employment, and their property confiscated in favour of noblemen that he (Guise) should name ; the post of admiral was demanded for Mayenne, and Brissac was to be governor of Paris, with the charge of colonel-general of the infantry ; besides a number of appointments for his friends ; the whole to be confirmed by the states-general which should be held in Paris without delay ; the King in addition was called upon to dismiss his guard of forty-five gentlemen, a new institution which the enterprises of the league had rendered necessary for his personal safety.*

To consent to such proposals would have been equivalent to an abdication ; still the Queen Mother would not leave Guise without hopes. She returned to the Louvre, and shewed to the King that his only chance was to leave Paris ; measures were taken in consequence to mislead the Duke of Guise. For that purpose she went again the next day to renew the conference, notwithstanding her great age, and the extreme inconvenience of the transport. While her chair was being lifted over one of the barriers, a citizen, under pretence of assisting, told her in a whisper that fifteen thousand persons were going to attack the Louvre on the side next the country. She sent one of her gentlemen to tell the King, and continued her route. When she arrived at the Duke's she was more obstinate than before, in order to prolong the conversation. In about two hour's time Meinville, one of Guise's friends, came to tell him that the King had escaped. Guise exclaimed, " Madam, I am a dead man ! while your majesty is amusing me here, the King goes away to ruin me." Catherine

* Davila, liv. 9. Maimbourg.—*Hist de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 41.

coolly replied, “ that she did not know his determination, and returned to the Louvre, where she gave orders for the court and the guards to make haste to join his majesty.”*

On hearing the message which the Queen had sent him, Henry pretending to take a walk in the garden of the Tuilleries, went to the stables where he equipped himself for his intended journey; and immediately set off on horseback, accompanied by fifteen or sixteen gentlemen. When he arrived at Chaillot, he stopped a few minutes to look at Paris. He is said to have poured out a malediction upon it and its inhabitants, and swore that he would re-enter it only through the breach. He was met by some of his court at St. Cloud, and arrived at Chartres the next day.†

The Swiss troops were on the point of joining the league; the brave Crillon, however, made an effort to prevent it, and was successful. He went to the place where the Swiss were quartered, and addressed the colonel upon the report which had reached him. “ Remember,” said he, “ the brave Pfiffer, your predecessor, who protected Charles IX. and brought him in safety from Meaux to Paris in sight of a rebel army; and can you consent to abandon a king who honours you with his confidence?” Crillon declared his conviction of their innocence, although the charge was but too well founded; and he called upon them to choose their alternative, which was either to fight with him and his loyal followers, or to renew their oath of fidelity, and follow the King to

* Davila, liv. 9. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 48. Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 319.

† Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 321. Mathieu, Mezeray et Maimbourg.

Chartres. They all consented to follow Crillon, who had the satisfaction of calming the King's mind by the presence of an armed force, which was equal to the protection of his person and court.*

The King's friends had great difficulty in escaping from the fury of the populace, who became enraged against them, when the King's flight was known. Many of them left Paris in such haste that they had not time to put on their boots. They would have had no chance of escape if the Parisians had not been so taken by surprise, that they were undecided whether to pursue those who had escaped, or to fall upon those that remained.†

The King's escape completely foiled Guise's plans ; he thought he should be able to enforce the conditions he had already dictated. But by a sort of fatality he committed the same fault which Henry had previously done. The leaguers were dissatisfied with him on that account, and some recommended that the enterprise should be abandoned.‡ Pasquier observes upon this subject, "since the Duke had the imprudence to come with only six friends, the King should have arrested him : he could have done so on the Tuesday and Wednesday, because he had then all the magistrates, the respectable inhabitants, and four thousand Swiss, besides his guards ; the populace therefore would not have stirred. Even on Thursday

* *Vie de Crillon*, vol. ii. p. 4.

† *Hist. des derniers troubles*, liv. 3. p. 61. *Davila*, liv. 9.

‡ The following is an extract of a letter from the governor of Orleans ; "Notre grand n'a su executer son dessein ; s'étant le Roi sauvé à Chartres, par quoi je suis d'avis que vous vous retiriez, en vos maisons, le plus doucement que pourrez, sans faire semblant d'avoir rien vu ; et si n'y pensez, être sûrement, venez ici."—*Mem de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 313.

morning he could have enclosed him with his troops, if by a false policy he had not in a manner tied the hands of his soldiers, by forbidding them to fire on the people when they began the barricades. But since Guise had overcome all these dangers, he ought not to have suffered the King to escape. He should have remained close to him, and then he might have obtained from him any declaration he pleased.* The probable fact was, that he could not conceive it possible for Henry to act with so much decision.

The Pope, Sixtus V., was quite concerned at the great encroachments on the authority and dignity of the French crown ; he had written at the beginning of the year to Henry, exhorting him to sustain with courage the honour of his throne, and to repress with firmness the pride and insolence of his rebellious subjects. He told him in his letter, “ that he should apply fire and sword to an inveterate evil ; and that he should not spare the blood of his subjects, which overflowed in their veins.”† But though Henry refused to follow this recommendation, Sixtus could not conceive that he would patiently be bearded on his throne. “ Oh ! what a rash and imprudent man ! ” he exclaimed, when he heard that Guise had come to Paris, and placed himself at Henry’s mercy ; “ Oh ! what a weak Prince ! ” he exclaimed still louder, when he heard that Henry had suffered the rebel to escape.‡ We are not informed of the exclamation he made when he heard that Guise in turn had suffered the King to leave Paris ; but may

* Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 340. † Leti. *Vita di Sisto V.* lib. 8.

‡ De Thou, liv. 90.

fairly presume that it was not less characteristic of his violent and sanguinary disposition.

After some deliberation, Guise seized upon the Bastille, the Hotel-de-Ville, the Châtelet, Arsenal, &c. Bussy-le-Clerc was made governor of the Bastille, and a new municipal administration was formed. Guise wished the parliament to be assembled, in order to confer importance on his arrangements by the approbation of that body. On addressing himself to the president Harlay, he was told with a severe look, "that it was much to be regretted when the valet drives away the master." Guise insisted on the necessity of certain measures which the parliament should adopt; to which Harlay replied, "when the majesty of the prince is violated, the magistrates have no longer any authority." The president Brisson was more complacent; and either through weakness, or a secret attachment to the league, he consented to the Duke's proposals. The barricades were taken down in a day or two; St. Cloud, Vincennes, Charenton and other places around, submitted to Guise; and the public peace was restored. The chiefs of the league addressed circulars to their friends in the provinces, and Guise addressed several letters to the King; probably with the hope of drawing him back to Paris. The King on his part published an account of the occurrence, which by its humble tone, forms a striking contrast to the bold language of the Duke of Guise.*

The Queen remained in Paris to treat with Guise; she availed herself of the mediation of the Duchess of Montpensier, whom she lured with the hope of

* Davila, liv. 9. Mathieu, liv. 8. Cayet, liv. 1. and Mem de la Ligue, vol. 2. pp. 313—342.

marrying the Cardinal of Bourbon. They persuaded Guise to be reconciled to the King; and the leaguers went in a solemn procession to Chartres, to express their regret at what had occurred, and to induce the King to return to his capital. A procession of persons, in the habits of penitents was made, to pray God to soften the King's heart; they set out afterwards for Chartres to address the King. "At the head of it," says De Thou, "appeared a man with a great beard, dirty and greasy, covered with hair-cloth; and wearing a broad belt, upon which hung a crooked sabre; at intervals he sent forth some harsh discordant sounds from an old rusty trumpet. After him marched fiercely three other men equally filthy; each of them having on his head a greasy pot, instead of a helmet; bearing coats of mail upon their hair-cloth, with brassards and gauntlets: their arms were rusty old halberts. These three braggadocios rolled about their wild and savage eyes, and hustled a great deal to keep off the crowd collected by this spectacle. After them came brother Ange de Joyeuse, that courtier who had turned capuchin the year before. He had been persuaded, in order to move Henry, to represent in this procession the Saviour going up to Calvary: he had suffered himself to be bound, and to have his face painted with drops of blood, which appeared to flow from his thorn-crowned head. He seemed to drag with difficulty a long cross of painted pasteboard; and at intervals he threw himself down, uttering lamentable groans. At his sides marched two young capuchins clothed in white robes; one representing the Virgin, the other the Magdalen. They turned their eyes devoutly towards heaven, shedding false tears; and every time brother Ange fell down, they prostrated themselves before him in cadence.

Four satellites, resembling the three former ; held the cord which bound brother Ange, and gave him blows with a scourge ; which were heard at some distance. A long train of penitents closed this ludicrous procession."

When this pious masquerade passed before the court at Chartres, Crillon, who stood by the King, called out to those who scourged brother Ange, " strike in good earnest ! whip away ! he is a coward who has taken the frock, that he may bear arms no longer." The King was disgusted with the indecent spectacle, and seriously reprimanded his former favourite, for turning into a farce the sacred mystery of Redemption. He told him also that they had abused his credulity in persuading him to put himself at the head of the rebels, under the pretext of religion ; " and I know," said Henry, raising his voice, " there are many rebels in this procession."*

Soon after this burlesque, a deputation waited on the King ; it consisted of the most respectable inhabitants of Paris ; and their address was in the most humble style of contrition. When the speaker had concluded his harangue, he respectfully presented a statement of their request, comprising five articles ; the extirpation of heresy by the united forces of the King and the league ; the banishment of Epernon and La Valette his brother ; a full amnesty for the disturbance in Paris ; the confirmation of the new appointments to officers since the barricades ; and the revival of the old ordonnances of the kingdom, restoring to the parliaments the right of verifying new edicts, and remonstrating upon them. The King in reply told them, that he fully intended assembling

* De Thou, liv. 90.

the states-general, as the most complete as well as the safest remedy for the disorders of the kingdom ; that there he would not neglect the fears entertained by the catholics, of falling under the dominion of the heretics ; that as to the particular complaint against the Duke of Epernon and his brother, he would shew that he was a just and equitable prince, who would injure no one, and would prefer the public advantage to every other consideration.*

The parliament was unwilling to appear forgetful of the sovereign ; or to countenance revolt by omitting any display of loyal homage : that body also sent a deputation to express to his majesty the regret they experienced at the misfortune which had forced him to quit Paris, to claim his clemency for the offenders, and to entreat him to return to his capital. Henry told them that he would treat them as children, not as slaves, and sent them away. But in the afternoon he sent for them again, and charged them to threaten the Parisians with the removal of the royal courts, if they persisted in their factious behaviour. “ I know,” said the King, “ that some persuade them, that having offended me as they have done, my indignation is beyond the power of reconciliation ; but I wish you to inform them that I have neither the wish, nor the humour to ruin them ; and as God does not desire the death of a sinner, neither do I, his unworthy image on earth, desire their destruction.” His speech was rather lengthy ; he appealed to the history of his life, and said, “ it is absurd to make a pretext of religion ; you should adopt some other plan ; there is not in the whole world a more catholic prince than

* Cayet, liv. 1. p. 62. Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 3. p. 86—9. De Thou, liv. 91.

myself; and my actions and my life have sufficiently testified it." He concluded with a short exhortation, and dismissed them.*

In the meantime the nation seemed to shudder at the recent insult offered to the monarch; not only a large proportion of the Parisians, who already perceived the injury their affairs would suffer from the absence of the court, and such of the nobility as considered the barricades too bold a measure, but several large towns sent addresses, inviting his majesty to repair thither to receive their warm greetings, and accept of their faithful services. Lyons, in particular, had sent deputies for that purpose, but it was so distant from the centre of operations, that Rouen was preferred. The King on arriving at that city was received with unusual demonstrations of joy.†

During the King's stay at Rouen, there was a constant interchange of couriers with Paris; the Queen being in correspondence with her son, and Guise with his agents. Henry was never absent from the consultations of his ministers; but he heard their discussions with indifference, and employed the intervals in light pastimes, apparently as a relief for his painful reflections.‡ An edict was at last produced, which was announced as the Edict of Union, but which is more generally known as the second Edict of July.§ The leaguers testified great joy at the articles agreed upon between Guise and the Queen

* Cayet, liv. 1. p. 67. De Thou, liv. 91. Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 3. p. 89. et seq. Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 362.

† Cayet, liv. 1. p. 69. Davila, liv. 9. p. 490.

‡ De Thou, liv. 91.

§ It was agreed upon the 15th; signed by the King on the 16th, and registered in parliament the 21st July, 1588.

Mother ; and with reason, for every item was in their favour except one, which stipulated that the Bastille should be given up to the King ; that article was never executed. The league considered they had gained a victory, and Henry confirmed that opinion, by publishing an order for the states-general to meet at Blois, in the month of October. Guise was named commander-general of the gendarmerie, an appointment equal to that of constable ; he met the King at Chartres with great cordiality. The Cardinal of Bourbon was declared, by edict, the first prince of the blood, and next in succession to the crown.*

Still the King refused to return to Paris ; and we are told, by Mathieu, that he signed the edict with tears in his eyes.† Two armies were raised to send against the Huguenots ; but the command of one was given to the Duke of Nevers, who was at variance with the Duke of Guise ; the King's confidants were D'Aumont, Rambouillet, and others, who were by no means friendly with him ; and a complete change in the administration took place, by the dismissals of Chiverny, Villeroy, Bellievre, and others, who had advised the reconciliation with the league ; their places were filled by persons recommended by Nevers, who had deserted the Holy Union.‡

Whether it formed a part of the King's policy to deprive the duke of Epernon of the government of Angoulême ; or if Villeroy acted with treachery towards him, and surreptitiously obtained the King's sig-

* The letters patent, for Guise, were dated the 14th of August ; the edict for the Cardinal of Bourbon, the 17th of August, 1588. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 74.

† Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 3. p. 102.

‡ Davila, liv. 9. p. 507. Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 68.

nature to the instrument, is uncertain ; but orders were sent to that town to refuse him admittance.* Epernon however had quitted his residence at Loches earlier than the court expected, and arrived at Angoulême before the orders were received. The mayor of the town was a zealous leaguer, and resolved on seizing him in the castle. He entered the place with ten men well armed ; and the Duke's attendants being quite off their guard, they succeeded in penetrating to the anti-chamber of his apartment. A violent struggle ensued ; several were killed on both sides ; but the noise brought other persons to the Duke's assistance. The alarm spread through the town, and the populace having been inflamed by various statements, injurious to the Duke, followed the example of the Parisians, and made barricades in every direction. But Epernon having the citadel with the garrison for him, in addition to those troops stationed at the chateau, or governor's residence, was able to suppress this tumult ; though not without considerable danger and exertion. The Duchess had just before left the chateau to go to mass, and fell into the hands of the leaguers. That however did not prevent him from valiantly defending the place, and declaring that he would give no quarter to any that fell into his hands. After thirty hours fighting, the arrival of some gens-d'armes made the people wish to settle the affair ; and by the mediation of the bishop, an accommodation was brought about. The nobles attached to the league quitted the town, and the Duke of Epernon remained governor ; he had shewn great personal courage in defending him-

* Mem. d'Etat. vol. i. p. 80. Villeroy, of course, insists upon having done no more than he was commanded.

self, and his moderation afterwards was equally great, for he took no measures whatever to resent the attack upon him, except refusing the customary honours at the funeral of the mayor, who fell in the fray.*

The court arrived at Blois on the twenty seventh of September. The King was desirous of giving every importance to the assembly about to be held; and ordered a magnificent procession for the Sunday following the second of October. On the ninth, the sacrament of the eucharist was administered to all the deputies present; the King and Guise receiving it together at the hands of the Cardinal of Bourbon, with the appearance of the most perfect reconciliation. It was not till the sixteenth the estates were opened.†

The meeting was held in the great hall of the castle; the majority of the deputies were leaguers, and Guise reckoned on certainly obtaining the full extent of his wishes; he opened the session as Grand Master of the King's household. “The deputies having entered,” says the historian Mathieu, “and the door being shut, the Duke of Guise seated in a chair, clothed in a dress of white satin, the cape thrown across, his eye piercing into the very thickest of the assembly to recognise and distinguish his servants, and with a single glance to strengthen them in the hope of advancing his designs, his fortune, and his grandeur, and silently to tell them, ‘I see you;’ rose, and after making a reverence, followed by two hundred gentlemen and captains of the guards, went to fetch the King, who entered full of majesty, wearing his grand order at his neck.”‡

* D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 121. De Thou, liv. 92. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 80. Davila, liv. 9, et Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 3. p. 107.

† Davila, liv. 9. p. 510. ‡ Mathieu, liv. 8. p. 631.

The speeches made at the opening of the states-general contained nothing remarkable; the second sitting was on the Tuesday following, when the Archbishop of Ambrun representing the clergy, the Count de Brissac, the noblesse, and the advocate Bernard, the *Tiers Etat* solicited the King to swear anew the oath of union. Henry found fault with such distrust; "for having already sworn it at Rouen, there was," said he, "no occasion to renew the oath;" notwithstanding, to satisfy the league he consented, and the sitting commenced with his taking it. Silence being proclaimed by a herald, the King said, "that in the former sitting he had testified his desire to see all his subjects united in the true catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion; and having given an edict in the month of July last, to effect that object, he wished it to be read publicly, and receive the solemn assent of the assembly." The edict was read by Beaulieu, the secretary; and the Archbishop of Bourges seriously exhorted the meeting upon it; after which the King and all the deputies swore to observe and to maintain it as a fundamental law of the kingdom. So great was the joy of all present at the King's piety, that shouts of *Vive Le Roy* resounded from all parts; and the assembly followed him to church to sing a *Te Deum*.*

Thus far the King and the states-general were in unison; but Guise had expectations of being proclaimed lieutenant-general of the kingdom by the assembly, who would at the same time exclude the Bourbon princes from the succession. The death of the King would then leave him a free course

* Cayet, liv. 1. p. 95. Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 4. p. 120.
Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 508.

for his ambition even on the supposition that he would be satisfied with waiting for his death. The King had received information of Guise's ambitious schemes, and therefore is thought to have practised great dissimulation when he made a public protestation of having forgotten the past, and sent an assurance to that effect to the people of Paris.

After the treaty of July, 1588, between the King and the league, Guise received a letter from the Archbishop of Lyons, containing advice for his government and conduct. The prelate described the prudence of Charles Martel, and shewed how necessary it was for him to be either lieutenant-general or constable, and to have the majority of the courtiers dependent upon him; he thus concludes, “this is what I wish to see, in order that we may afterwards consider what you should do to attain your *object*, &c.*

Soon after a circumstance occurred which alarmed the whole court, and might have produced results of a serious nature. Its only consequence, however, was to display the devotedness of Guise's followers and the animosity which prevailed among all ranks, connected with either the King's party, or the league. On the night of the fourth of November, a quarrel arose between a servant of the *Guisard* party, and the Duke of Montpensier's page. The servant was killed; and both parties took arms, collected their friends, and began a terrible conflict. The Guisards had the advantage, and drove their opponents back into the King's residence.† The arrival

* Mem. de d'Etat de Villeroy, vol. iii. p. 124.

† Davila, liv. 9. p. 535.

of the military quelled the tumult, but the King was alarmed until the affair was cleared up; he was persuaded that it was a plan of Guise's to attack him; and this proof of the hatred between the parties, and the readiness of the Duke's followers to proceed to extremities, was an additional cause of disquiet, as it held out so much encouragement to his ambitious schemes.

But Guise's audacity in a certain degree prevented his own success; ambition had blinded his prudence, and as he had escaped unhurt from the interview at Paris, he fancied it beyond the King's power to molest him. His haughtiness had destroyed the friendship which many of the nobles had entertained for him; and their coolness, growing to jealousy, they informed the monarch of various circumstances which called for the greatest energy on his part. The Cardinal of Guise gave scope to the most licentious railleries on the King, and frequently said that he ought to be shut up in a monastery, and that he should feel extreme pleasure in holding his head, while he received a capuchin's crown. The Duchess Montpensier was furious against the King; she constantly exhibited a pair of scissars, which she said she kept ready to give Henry a monacal crown, whenever he was confined in a convent;* and one of the deputies of the clergy, called the barricades a holy and blessed event, even in the King's presence.† These things, added to the hostile operations of the Duke of Savoy, who was strongly suspected of acting in concert with Guise, made Henry resolve to adopt some strong measure towards this insolent subject.

* De Thou, liv. 93.

† Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 362.

The Duke of Savoy had seized upon the marquisate of Saluces; and the general feeling of the states-general, was to lay aside domestic quarrels, and attack the stranger; Guise was opposed to this, and said that the war with Savoy need not make any difference in the war with the Huguenots; at the same time taking measures for making the war impracticable, by spreading a report that the King himself had concerted the invasion of the Duke of Savoy, in order to prevent the execution of the edicts against the heretics.*

Guise, in the extent of his influence, and the importance of his functions, resembled the ancient mayors of the palace: and Henry's mind was alive to that resemblance, as well as to the parallel conclusion, which was contemplated. Every day during his residence at Blois, he was informed of some fresh insult on the part of the Guises. Among others, Marshal d'Aumont informed him of the Duke's proposal to join in compelling his majesty to deprive the Duke of Montpensier of the government of Normandy, and promising to confer it on him as a reward.† This desire to remove a prince of the blood from his post, inclined the King to give more credit to a communication sent by the Duchess of Aumale, informing him of the intended attempt to seize his person, and confine him in a convent, at the same time advising him to anticipate the blow. Letters were also received from the Dukes of Mayenne and Epernon, stating that an attempt upon his person was under discussion.‡

* Davila, liv. 9. p. 529. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 97.

† De Thou, liv. 93.

‡ Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 4. p. 142. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 149. Mem. de Nevers, vol. ii. p. 63.

We know not the precise time when these communications were made to the King; but the journal of the time informs us, "that on the fourth of December, the King swore upon the sacrament at the altar, perfect reconciliation and friendship with the Duke of Guise, and forgetfulness of all past quarrels; and which he did apparently quite freely: he even declared, in order to amuse that party, that he was resolved to leave the management of affairs to his cousin of Guise and to the Queen his mother in order to occupy himself entirely with prayer and penitence."* What a dreadful display of impious perfidy! It is true that he did not finally resolve on putting Guise to death till the eighteenth;† but it is also known that previous to the states of Blois he had contemplated some strong measure. Both he and Guise were trying to surprise each other, and each was aware of the other's design.

When the King was convinced, that it was absolutely necessary for him to strike the fatal blow, or consent to be struck, he consulted with Marshal d'Aumont, Beauvais-Nangis, and two others, but without calling in the Queen Mother. After detailing the injuries he had received from Guise, he asked for their sincere opinions, upon the conduct he should follow in his dangerous situation. The first who gave his sentiments recommended the arrest of Guise and his chief partisans, and that they should be tried by the parliament; but upon consideration it was judged impracticable, on account of the number of his friends, and the influence of

* *Journal de Henri, III. vol. i. p. 102.*

† *Davila, liv. 9. p. 540.*

his party. It was then agreed upon, that his guilt of high treason and rebellion was clear; that as he was above the control of the laws, he could be punished without the formalities of justice; and that there was no other way to prevent him from carrying into effect the design which he was known to be planning against the King.*

The measure being decided on, Henry looked around for a person capable of executing it, and fixed his eye on Crillon; he considered a refusal from him, as very improbable for the Duke of Guise had demanded his banishment as one of the conditions of reconciliation. He sent for him and after exposing the Duke's crimes he said, "do you think he merits death?" "Yes," answered Crillon. "Well then!" said the King, "you are the man I have chosen to punish him." Crillon was delighted at the honor of being the champion of his sovereign, and said, "I will meet him, and my sword shall pierce his heart, even if I receive his in my own bosom, and die with him." "Stop," said Henry, "I do not wish to get rid of the chief of the rebels by exposing the life of my friend; your existence is dear to me; we must strike him without compromising you." Crillon shuddered with horror at the proposal, and felt inexpressible regret that the King should have thought him capable of such an act: at the same time to prevent any fear of his betraying the secret, he offered to remain in custody. His word, however, was sufficient for the monarch. Lorgnac, captain of the guards, called the *Forty-five*, undertook the commission; the whole of that body were devoted

* Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 4. Davila, liv. 9. et Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 366.

to Epernon, and in consequence were enemies of Guise.*

In the meantime Guise's friends became alarmed for his safety, and urged him to retire from Blois. The King's patience had excited their suspicions, which were in a great measure confirmed by their anxious inquiries. But Guise paid no attention to their entreaties, and the day before that which was intended for his assassination, he found on sitting down to table a note in the folds of his napkin, containing a caution against an intended attack upon him. He merely wrote upon it with his pencil, "They would not dare attempt it," and threw it under the table.†

On the twenty-second of December the King sent word to Guise, that as he purposed going to Notre-Dame de Clery to pass the festival of Christmas, he should hold his council early the next morning. Lorgnac at the same time received his instructions; he had entered by a private door, accompanied by thirteen of the most resolute of his company. Henry addressed them in a few words, and promised them great rewards. He gave each of them a poniard, and said, "this is the greatest criminal in my kingdom, and the laws, both human and divine, allow me to punish him; but not being able to do so by the ordinary ways of justice, I authorise you by my royal prerogative." He then placed them in an antichamber, through which the Duke would pass.

The Duke and the Cardinal of Guise consulted with the Archbishop of Lyons, on the propriety of retiring from Blois. They considered the advantage which Henry's friends would gain over them if they

* Davila, liv. 9. p. 542. Vie de Crillon, vol. ii. p. 24.

† Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 4. p. 146. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 151.

withdrew before the conclusion of the states-general ; and things had proceeded so far, that the retreat of one party was certain victory for the other ; these considerations, added to the most complete contempt for the King, made them pay no further attention to the warnings which they continued to receive till the last moment ; Guise passed the night with the Marchioness of Noirmoutier,* who had come to Blois on purpose to persuade him to remove, but nothing could induce him to change his opinion.

Early the next morning he went to the council, and when he had entered the castle the gates were shut. Pericard, his secretary, observing this, wrote a note and sent it to the Duke folded in a handkerchief ; the note contained another warning, but the bearer was not able to obtain admission. Guise being in the hall, was observed to look pale ; different reasons have been assigned for it, but the most probable is, that on finding himself surrounded by soldiers of the *Forty-five* ; and none of those persons present who were usually in attendance, he called to mind his repeated warnings, and too late regretted his blind presumption. Presently he was summoned to the King's presence, and as he approached the door, one the assassins stabbed him in the breast ; the others did the same, and the Duke before he died had only time to make a short exclamation, the substance of which is not known with any certainty.† The Cardinal of Guise hearing the noise immediately suspected that it was an attack upon his

* She was well known for her gallantries as Madame de Sauve.

† Some say it was *Dieu ayez pitié de moi !* others, *Ah ! traître roi !*

brother ; he and the Archbishop of Lyons ran to the door to give the alarm, and call their friends ; but the Marshals d'Aumont and De Retz arrested, and placed them in a small room under a strong guard. At the same time were arrested the Cardinal of Bourbon, the Prince of Joinville, then become Duke of Guise by his father's death, the Dukes of Elbœuf and Nemours, and the Duchess of Nemours, Guise's mother. The principal leaguers in the town were also taken into custody, and among them Pericard the Duke's secretary, by which means the King obtained a number of letters and papers, which shewed that he had received considerable sums from Spain to promote his enterprise.*

When the door of the anti-chamber was thrown open the King came out of his apartment with his suite ; many of the courtiers made jesting remarks upon the *King of Paris*, and Henry himself is said to have kicked the dead body of his enemy.† The King then went to his mother's chamber to inform her of what had taken place. She was ill in bed, and had asked several times what was the cause of the noise and bustle, but no one had dared to inform her of it. The Queen having informed her son that she felt rather better, he answered, “ and so do I, for this morning I have become King of France, having put to death the King of Paris.” “ You have killed the Duke of Guise,” said Catherine, “ God grant that this death do not make you King of nothing. Have you considered the consequences ? Two things are necessary

* D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 151. Davila, liv. 9. p. 549. Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 4. p. 147. Cayet, liv. 1. pp. 105—110.

† Journal de Henri III. vol. i. p. 102.

for you, diligence and resolution ;" she also recommended him to send Cardinal Gondy to inform the legate.*

After hearing mass the King had a long conversation with Cardinal Morosini, the legate. He endeavoured to convince him of the necessity in which he had found himself to save his crown and his life by that method ; concluding by a request that he would inform the Pope of all those reasons before the misrepresentations of his enemies should raise an unfavourable opinion of him in the mind of his holiness. Morosini perceiving the necessity of humouring the King to prevent his thinking of a peace with the Huguenots, answered him with great address ; while Henry was so anxious to preserve the Pope's friendship, that he swore to the legate that if Sixtus would co-operate with him, he would make still greater exertions to exterminate the heretics from his kingdom, in which he was resolved to suffer none but the true religion to be exercised. The legate was well aware of all the circumstances respecting Guise's death, and Henry's communication taught him nothing fresh on that subject ; but the King's principal aim was to have his sentiments respecting the Cardinal of Guise, whose death he had also contemplated. The legate, however, avoided that subject, and pretended not to know that the Cardinal and the Archbishop of Lyons were in prison ; he continued his familiarity with the King, went with him to mass, and gave him marks of particular confidence. This line of conduct was interpreted by the King's friends as a silent approba-

* Davila, liv. 9. p. 550.—D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 153, et Hiat. des derniers troubles, liv. 4. p. 149.

tion of his vengeance, and made many think that the Pope was previously informed of his intentions.*

The King finding the Cardinal's imprisonment did not create any opposition from the legate; and being informed of the violent threats he had made on hearing of his brother's death, and the dread of his revenge, if he lived, operating on many of the King's advisers, his death also was decided on. But a fresh difficulty arose; the assassins, who had murdered the Duke without scruple, refused to stain their hands with the blood of an ecclesiastic. At last four soldiers were found, whose objections were overcome by a promise of four hundred crowns. They proceeded, on the morning of the twenty-fourth, to the room where the Cardinal and his companion had passed a troubled night. On opening the door, they called forth the Archbishop, telling him the King wanted him. The two prisoners received each other's confession, and were both in expectation of being murdered: as the Archbishop quitted the chamber, they mutually exhorted each other to think of God. After conducting the Archbishop to another room, Du Guast, who commanded

* Cayet, liv. 1. p. 110. Davila, liv. 9. p. 553. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 152. G. Leti, liv. 10. But Maimbourg, upon the authority of Morosini's letter to the Cardinal Montalto, asserts that the interview between the King and the legate did not take place till the 26th, that is after the death of the Cardinal. However, as Cayet, Davila, and D'Aubigné, were contemporaries, and Gregorio Leti was in a situation to be well informed of the merits of the case, I have adopted their version, and am the more satisfied in so doing as Sixtus was very angry with his legate for being so friendly with the King: Morosini's letter, therefore, was a defence of his own conduct, and being *ex parte* is not of such an overwhelming authority as to reduce all contrary statements to "fictions, such as poets only are allowed to use."—See *Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 91.

the assassins, returned and told the Cardinal he had the King's orders to kill him. “ Execute your commission,” said the Cardinal, after a short pause occupied in prayer, at the same time covering his head with his gown; the soldiers immediately put him to death with their spears.*

The two bodies were placed in quick-lime to destroy the flesh, the bones were afterwards burnt to ashes, and thrown away by the King's orders; he was fearful that their remains would be treated by the league as holy relics.†

Thus perished the Duke and the Cardinal of Guise; had their death been attended with the bare forms of justice, there would exist but one opinion on the subject. They had succeeded in establishing such a power in the state, that they could set the laws at defiance; and it must also be recollected, that according to the ultramontane notions, then bearing such terrible sway, the Cardinal of Guise could not be brought to judgment by the King of France. These circumstances should have their weight in estimating the King's conduct. Unhappily for him, he had been nurtured in bigotry, and trained to dissimulation. The former prevented him from acting fairly by those who would have preserved him from the dreadful dilemma in which he found himself; while the latter became a ready resource, when he discovered the necessity of adopting this measure as his only alternative.

The Duke of Guise is described as having excelled in every quality required in nobles of the time;

* D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 152. Davila, liv. 9. p. 556. Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 4.

† Journal de Henri III. D'Aubigné. Henry, Duke of Guise, was born in 1550. Lewis the Cardinal in 1553.

and the Cardinal was reputed to be learned, generous, of a penetrating mind and a courageous spirit. But although the establishment of the league, and the circumstances to which it gave rise, raised the two brothers to the first degree of importance during the political hurricane, they can never be compared to their father, Francis Duke of Guise, and his brother the Cardinal of Lorrain.

CHAP. XL.

DEATH OF CATHERINE DE MEDICIS:—CONCLUSION OF THE STATES-GENERAL;—VIOLENCE OF THE LEAGUE IN PARIS;—MAYENNE APPOINTED LIEUTENANT-GENERAL.

THE death of the Guises completely changed the face of affairs; the King, however, did not derive from the event those advantages which had been expected. As so strong a measure had not been decided upon without mature deliberation, it should have been promptly followed up with vigour; and Henry ought to have attacked his revolted subjects before they had time to recover from the amazement into which the loss of their chief had thrown them; but his orders were barely carried into execution, when he almost regretted having given them. Irresolution, his bane, again possessed him, and he seemed to recoil from his own work.

Of all the leaguers taken into custody, when Guise

was killed, there remained in a few days only the young Duke of Guise, the Duke of Elboeuf, the Cardinal of Bourbon, and the Archbishop of Lyons; they were confined in separate apartments in the castle of Amboise, and Du Guast, the assassin of the Cardinal, was entrusted with the charge of them. The Duke of Nemours made his escape, and returned to Paris; the Duchess of Nemours, (the mother of the Guises), was set at liberty in consideration of her birth, being a grand-daughter of Louis XII.; and the different deputies to the states-general were enlarged on the plea of public faith. The Duke of Mayenne was at Lyons, and Alphonso Ornano was sent to arrest him, but without success; for directly the death of Guise was known, two leaguers had quitted Blois to warn the remaining hope of their party; and they had no time to spare, for Mayenne quitted Lyons by one gate as Ornano entered by another. He went at once to Dijon, where he was governor.* A similar activity, on the part of the league, anticipated the King in getting possession of Orléans.† Henry was urged to take the field, to recall the army from Poictou, and prevent Mayenne from collecting his forces. He thought, however, that he should be joined by the catholics of the league, whose aim being more to suppress the Huguenots than to assist the Guises, would cheerfully help him in subduing the King of Navarre, and thus enable him to restore order. He contented himself therefore with publishing a declaration, justifying his conduct towards the Guises, and renewing the edict of union, to shew his attachment to the catholic faith.

* Davila, liv. 9. p. 560.

† Cayet, liv. 1. p. 113. Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 4. p. 149.

Had he shewn himself before Orléans, his presence alone would have preserved that city from joining in the rebellion; but he ridiculed the advice which was given him both to that effect, and also to unite with the King of Navarre, a measure which ultimately he could not avoid.*

Soon after the Cardinal of Guise was killed, two counsellors and a clerk were sent to the Archbishop of Lyons, to question him upon the charges against the Duke of Guise. The Archbishop told them, that as they were laymen they had no jurisdiction over him, and that he should not answer their questions. When this answer was reported to the King he sent Cardinal Gondy to speak to him.† The Archbishop said, he had nothing to allege against the Cardinal or the Duke of Guise, but that if he had, he neither could nor would be questioned, except by the Pope, or some one delegated by him; for as Primate of all Gaul, he had no other judge; and that even he, the Cardinal, was under his primacy, being Bishop of Paris. "But," added he, "if Cardinal Morosini, his holiness's legate, finds, on consulting with the other prelates, who are assembled for the states-general, that I ought to reply, I will follow their decision; for then it will be they and not I who infringe upon the rights of ecclesiastics." Nearly a fortnight was occupied in discussing whether the King did or did not possess the right of judging a bishop of his kingdom; after which, the Bishop of Beauvais, and Ruzé, a secretary of state, went to the Archbishop, and exhorted him

* Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 4. p. 153.

† Peter Gondy, Bishop of Paris and Cardinal, born at Lyons in 1533; died 1616. He was brother of Marshal de Retz.

to conform to the King's wishes, urging as a reason for his compliance, that his life had been spared. But the Archbishop was inflexible; he asked the Bishop in what capacity he came: "If you come," said he, "as a bishop, you cannot interrogate your superior; if as peer, it is a lay office to which I cannot submit: thank God I know the privileges and authority of the church; I cannot think that the King wishes me to disregard them; and as he has given me my life, he surely will leave free my conscience also, which is dearer to me than a thousand lives." The Archbishop concluded by requesting his majesty to allow him to be accompanied by some ecclesiastic, and to hear mass in his room, which permission was readily given.*

The Queen Mother died on the fifth of January, 1589. She went to see the Cardinal of Bourbon, soon after the death of Guise; as she entered his room he exclaimed, "Ah, Madam! you have led us all to be slaughtered." She assured him that she had not the least idea of it before it took place, and that she felt an unspeakable regret that it had occurred; but the Cardinal's reproaches became still more violent, and she felt severely the reflection, that she should have made herself liable to such a charge, by a long series of duplicity and cruelty. She went home and became a prey to the violent conflict of her ideas.† On her death-bed she is said to have exhorted the King to attach himself to the Princes of Bourbon, and especially to the King of Navarre; and to have impressed on his mind, that

* Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 4. p. 151. Davila, liv. 9.

† Brantôme, vol. 1. p. 119. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 153. Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 377. Mathieu, liv. 8. p. 669.

he never could have peace unless he granted liberty of conscience to his subjects.*

Those of the Queen Mother's deeds which are known with certainty, (without considering those which are imputed to her with every appearance of probability,) display her character more clearly than language can describe it: still the fact of those charges against her being currently received, evidently proves, that by the nation at large she was thought to be capable of any crime. A notion prevailed at Florence, that when her nativity was cast, the astrologers declared that if she lived, she would be the cause of very great calamities, and would totally ruin the family into which she married, and the place where she might settle. The Florentines thinking she might cause their ruin, proposed when Clement VII. besieged them to expose her to the enemy's fire; and a preacher in his sermons recommended her to be disposed of in some manner: among other things it was suggested to place her in a brothel, and keep her ignorant of her birth.†

She possessed a strong mind, a persuasive eloquence, and an invention so ready, that she never wanted an expedient; this to be sure was more easy for her than for others; because to effect her purposes, she never considered any means improper or unjust. In furtherance of her artful plans, she availed herself of the licentiousness of the court, and by her encouragement raised it to a pitch of unparalleled dissoluteness and infamy. Her principal weakness was the habit of frequently consulting astrologers; but in the exercise of her cruelty and perfidy, she

* De Bury. *Hist. de Henri IV.* vol. i. p. 245.

† *Discours de la vie de Catherine de Medicis*, p. 355.

became so much detested by both catholics and protestants, that her foibles were thrown in the shade. Being entirely taken up with the weightier matters of public affairs, she paid little or no attention to those subjects which generally occupy the minds of ladies of rank, and appears to have cared but little for the adulations which are invariably offered to a female sovereign.* The feelings of vanity were smothered in her breast by the calculations of policy, and the sparrings of ambition: indeed this latter impulse was too strong to allow maternal affection to have its proper way; for she encouraged her children in habits of licentiousness, in order to make them subservient to her purposes, and to prevent them from becoming obstacles to her views, instead of exciting them to actions worthy of their important station in society. Brantome extols her as being unequalled in the management of a splendid court, and attempts to answer many of the charges against her; while Davila attributes the greater part of those charges to malice or ignorance. The facts, however, are too well authenticated for her reputation to admit of much defence; she possessed good qualifications rather than good qualities, and the good which she effected was only momentary, while the injuries she inflicted on the country were of long duration. Catherine de Medicis at the time of her decease, was in the seventieth year of her age.

* After a long conference at St. Bris with the King of Navarre, finding she could not bring him to accept her terms, she asked him if the trouble she had taken was to produce no effect; adding that she wished for nothing more than peace. “Madam,” said Navarre, “it is not my fault that you do not sleep in your own bed; but you prevent me from sleeping in mine; the trouble you take gratifies and nourishes you, for quiet is the greatest enemy of your life.”—*Pereire*, liv. 1. p. 56.

The people of Paris thinking she was concerned in the murder of the Guises, declared that if her body came there in its way to St. Denis, they would drag it through the streets, and throw it into the river.*

The states-general were closed on the sixteenth of January, as the confusion of public affairs prevented any probable benefit being derived from their consultations. Previous to their separation, each order presented a remonstrance to the King on the different disorders and irregularities in the government. The principal grievance in the eyes of the clergy was the alienation of the church lands. "Saint Augustin and several good fathers, said the Archbishop of Bourges, have permitted the sale and alienation of church property for redeeming captives, and for the poor; but that was the vessels and money belonging to the church, for the alienation of church lands is without example. Charles Martel alone has made himself infamous, by attempting to obtain the estates of the church; and a horrible serpent was afterwards found in his tomb. Not all the wars against the Albigenses, nor the distresses of the wars against the English, have been able to destroy this palladium, so much as the suggestions of concealed Huguenots."†

The remonstrance of the noblesse, presented by the Count de Brissac, was as inveterate against the Huguenots as that of the clergy; but while they were willing to help the King against that *most dangerous and abominable sect*, whose impiety being extreme should be chastised with extreme severity, they would not overlook their own exclusive interests, and called

* *Journal de Henri III.* vol. i. p. 105.

† *Hist. des derniers troubles*, liv. 4. p. 163.

on his majesty, to prevent persons from obtaining, by money or other means, the rank and privileges of gentlemen.*

Bernard, the speaker for the *Tiers Etat*, commenced his harangue, by solemnly thanking the King for his promise to execute the holy edict of union, which he stated to be written by divine inspiration, and which would dissipate heresy, as fogs are scattered by the sun. But the picture which he afterwards gave of the state of society was sufficient to prevent any very considerable benefit to be expected from it. “Blasphemy,” said he, “is the ordinary conversation of many, and adultery is their recreation; magic employs their minds, and occupies their curiosity; and simony is their common trade. Thus the splendour of justice is dimmed, good customs are perverted, virtue is banished, and vice placed in authority; while rapine strides through the kingdom with an unfurled standard.”†

Henry’s zeal for the catholic church was well known. Duplessis Mornay writing to the King of Navarre, says, “Sire, I persist in my opinion of yesterday; the King will continue the war against you, unless his plans are traversed by the remains of the league faction. But at any rate, he will not dare to speak of peace.”‡ But that did not preserve him from the vengeance of the enraged Sixtus V. who after expressing his regret, that Henry should suffer so tamely the insolence of the league, was surprised to find that he had inflicted capital punishment on a cardinal. When he heard that Guise was killed, he told the Cardinal Joyeuse, that if he had been King

* Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 4. p. 167. † Ibid. p. 170.

‡ Mem. de Duplessis Mornay, vol. i. p. 878. The letter is dated 27th December, 1588.

of France, he would have done the same; but the news of the cardinal's arrest had put him in so violent a rage, that when Cardinal Gondy arrived at Rome, he set up a whole night with the Marquis Pisany, the French ambassador, consulting on the best means of preparing the pontiff for the news of which he was the bearer. It was impossible to avoid irritating him exceedingly by the communication, and he refused to hear any thing of the King's attachment to the church. Sixtus said it was useless to talk of Henry's submission to the church, while he held prisoners the Cardinal of Bourbon and the Archbishop of Lyons: "Your master," said he to the messengers, "thinks to deceive me, and treats me as if I were no more than a poor monk; but you shall find that you deceive yourselves, and that you have to deal with a pontiff who is ready to shed plenty of blood when the honour and interest of the church require support." "But, holy father!" said Pisany, "shall not the King, my master, be at liberty to kill the Cardinal of Guise his mortal enemy, after Pope Pius IV. has authorised the murder of Cardinal Caraffe, who had been one of his friends." Sixtus was too enraged to reply, and dismissed them both from his presence.*

When the consistory was assembled, Sixtus gave vent to his rage against the Cardinal Morosini, whom he accused of not having done what he could to prevent the cardinal's death; he even threatened to deprive him of his purple.† Sometime after a bull of excommunication was issued against the King of France, notwithstanding repeated missions to Rome, to pacify the pontiff, and obtain his absolution.

* G. Leti. *Vita di Sisto V.* lib. 10.

† Ibid.

While the King was wasting his time at Blois, his enemies were making great advantages, and the rebellion in Paris outstripped all idea. When the leaguers first heard of the death of their chief they were paralysed; they considered it impossible for the King to have attempted such a thing, unless he were sure of some support, which at present they knew nothing of; their fears therefore magnified its force, and there can be no doubt, that if Henry III. had sent some officer of rank to Paris, with a few troops, the violent members of the league would have fled, and the populace would soon have become calm and satisfied. The city appeared overwhelmed with grief and astonishment; and the mass was performed in the churches without any kind of music.* But the King's indecision ruined every thing, by giving time for the active rebels to rally their companions, and in a few days the fury of the league burst forth with redoubled fierceness. We learn from the journal of the time, that on the 29th of December, the people on leaving the church of St. Bartholomew, where Dr. Lincestre had been preaching, pulled down the king's arms which were over the door, broke them to pieces, and trampled them in the kennel; being animated to it by the discourse they had just heard, upon the perjuries and heresies of Henry of Valois, who was no longer their King.†

Versoris, who had been employed as the advocate of the Jesuits, was so affected by the murder of the Lorrain princes that it caused his death. As he was expiring, he embraced Guise's portrait; and being shewn that of the King, he called him a tyrant, and broke it to pieces.‡

* Davila, liv. 10. p. 9.

† Journal de Henri III. vol. ii. p. 316. ‡ Ibid. p. 317.

The preachers exerted themselves to inflame the public mind, and the cardinal's death gave them great scope for their declamations. "To murder the Duke," said Lincestre, "indicated but little attachment to the Holy Union; but to assassinate a prelate, was a crime against religion itself. The catholics must unite to avenge this crime, and employ if necessary their last mite, and their last drop of blood for it. Swear to do so; swear it, all of ye! and lift up your right hands in token of your oath." The president, Harlay, happened to be present, and the preacher insolently called out to him; "Lift up your hand also, Mr. Chief President, lift it up high, that every body may see it."*

Every pulpit resounded with invectives against the King's person, and with the most pathetic descriptions of the tragical death of the two brothers, who were extolled as martyrs. The hearers were moved to tears; but instead of inculcating christian doctrines, and holding up the examples of christian martyrs, the preachers endeavoured to inspire an ardent desire of revenge. "So that those," says Maimbourg, "who had no wish to weep or to sigh; and who were scandalized with manners so very unworthy of a holy miaistry, were constrained to counterfeit weeping, for fear of being murdered."†

If we can depend upon Marshal Bassompierre's narrative, the reanimation of the league was principally occasioned by the discovery of a concealed treasure, which enabled his father, Christopher Bassompierre, to raise an army of foreigners. That

* 1st Jan. 1589. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 118. *Journal de Henri III.* vol. i. p. 103.

† *Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 114.

gentleman was a native of Lorrain, and a warm partisan of the league. He was at Blois during the meeting of the states-general, and as he was known to possess great influence among the Germans and Swiss, the King sent Crillon to arrest him immediately after the death of Guise. Bassompierre having some apprehension of such a measure, made preparations for leaving Blois, and escaped with one attendant, as the bridge was being drawn up. He passed through Chartres, where he called upon the people to take arms, and proceeded to Paris, where he was introduced to the council, then deliberating at the Hotel-de-Ville. His opinion was, that unless they had money sufficient to carry on a war, they had better make the best terms possible with the King. The assembly took time for deliberation: in the interval, a mason who had been employed in concealing a sum of five hundred and thirty thousand golden crowns, denounced this fact to the council, who immediately decided upon a war, and commissioned Bassompierre to levy troops in Germany and Switzerland.*

The Sixteen elected the Duke of Aumale for their governor; he had not entertained the most favourable idea of the states of Blois and had remained in Paris.† This choice was remarkable as it was rumoured that he had been in treaty with the King; he demanded the government of Picardy and Boulogne, and that his debts should be liquidated out of the public treasury.‡ The Duchess

* Mem. du Marechal de Bassompierre, vol. i. pp. 23—25.

† Davila, liv. 10. p. 8.

‡ It was also believed that the Duchess of Aumale decided Henry III. by a letter which she sent him, to warn him against some violent measures contemplated by the Guises. See the *Satyre Menipee*.

of Montpensier a woman of great courage, contributed very much to rally the spirits of the league; and it was said, that her tongue did the King more harm than her brothers' swords.* The Duchess of Guise, who was pregnant at the time, at first gave vent to her grief, and in silence and retirement poured forth lamentations and tears. But afterwards she presented a demand to the parliament, calling for an inquiry into her husband's death. The proceedings on this point were carried to a great length; but when affairs took another turn, and the Parisians opened their gates to Henry IV. the leaves of the register were torn out and destroyed, to avoid the resentment of that prince, and of those counsellors who would not be parties to the proceedings.†

Most probably that refusal on the part of some counsellors of the parliament, was the cause of their being sent to the Bastille. On the morning of the sixteenth of January, Bussy-le-Clerc accompanied by twenty-five or thirty black guards, armed with pistols, and cuirasses, went into the court, and calling several counsellors by name, told them to follow him to the Hotel-de-Ville. Harlay and some others wished to know by what authority he thus acted, but was only told that they had better lose no time in making objections, or force would be used. When the presidents Harlay and Potier followed Bussy, they were attended by all the counsellors, even those who were not called, alleging that they could not separate from their captains. Instead of

* Davila, liv. 10. p. 9.

† Davila liv. 10. p. 15. Cayet liv. 1. p. 140. Perefixe, liv. 1. p. 77.

going to the Hotel-de-Ville they were led to the Bastille, and a new parliament was formed, consisting of persons devoted to the league. Molé was appointed attorney-general by acclamation, although he was on Bussy's list; and it was with regret he accepted the office, but to have refused it might have cost him his life, on account of the hatred borne to all who were suspected of favouring the claims of the King of Navarre. Brisson was made the new chief President, and in that quality assented to a decree declaring the King fallen from his dignity, and deprived of his authority; but at the same time to make sure of a good plea, in the event of the King's party prevailing, he made a protestation before two notaries, in which he declared he had been compelled to give his assent to measures against his inclination, and that he had no other means of saving the lives of his wife and children.*

A few days after a herald arrived from the King, ordering Aumale to leave Paris, and forbidding the parliament and other courts to exercise any jurisdiction. So far were the leaguers from paying any attention to this summons, that they put the herald in prison, whence, after remaining some time in expectation of being hanged, he was insultingly sent away. Every thing which could be devised was done to encourage the popular hatred to the King; even his name was detested, and no one would venture to mention it. Processions of children were considered a sure way of touching the sensibility of the people; and they frequently

* Journal de Henri III. vol. i. p. 105—109. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 121. De Thou, liv. 94. Le Grain, liv. 4. Davila, liv. 10.

paraded the streets. On one occasion they had assembled to the number of near a hundred thousand ; they went from the cemetery of the Innocents, to the church of St. Genéviève, each carrying a taper of consecrated wax. As they entered the church they extinguished the lights, and uttered expressions indicating that the race of Valois should become equally extinct. Other persons joined these processions afterwards, and the young women, to shew their excessive grief, went half naked ; and as nocturnal processions were made, the greatest disorders arose from the licentious conduct of the Duke of Aumale and his young companions.*

The decree of the Sorbonne, which released the French from their allegiance to the King, had the full effect which its authors intended.† By this the confessors were enabled to stifle in the breasts of their penitents, every vestige of fidelity to the King ; absolution was refused to all who would not renounce him as their sovereign ; and some recommended his assassination as a meritorious act. Every portrait, statue, and bust of Henry III. was then thrown down, destroyed, and cast with execrations into the river ; while those of the Guises were placed upon the altars. Lincestre and Boucher in the meantime were indefatigable in preaching to the people the most inflammatory discourses ; Lincestre in particular recommended assassination. "I still hear it questioned," said he, "if it be lawful to kill Henry of Valois ; for my part, I declare that I should be ready to kill him at

* *Journal de Henri III.* p. 110—112. *Le Grain*, liv. 4. p. 170.

† *Cayet*, liv. 1. p. 119. It was dated 17 January, 1589.

all times; even when I am at the altar, and holding the precious body of the Lord in my hands."*

While the Parisians were in this state of excitement, the Duke of Mayenne arrived towards the end of February. He had received letters while at Dijon from his sister, the Duchess of Montpensier, who gave him every encouragement to make an effort for obtaining the crown; and certainly the flaming enthusiasm of the leaguers throughout France afforded him the greatest chance of success. No wonder, therefore, that he disregarded a letter from the King, in justification of the death of the Guises, and offering to unite with him for preserving the peace among the catholics, in order to make war against the Huguenots. The Duchess, however, would not trust to her letter alone, but went to Dijon notwithstanding the inclemency of the season. Her exhortations, and the advice he received from Aumale and others, made him decide on becoming chief of the league; he commissioned persons to make preparations for carrying on the war, and proceeded to Paris, where he was solemnly invested with the dignity of Lieutenant-general of the state and crown of France; he was to have the full powers of royalty until that point should be decided by the states-general, which would be held at Paris in the month of July.†

The King was fearful of being surprised at Blois, and removed to Tours, to which town he transferred the parliament and royal courts of Paris.‡ He ordered an inquiry to be instituted into the crima-

* *Journal de Henri III.* p. 113.

† *Davila*, liv. 10. p. 30-31. *Le Grain*, liv. 4.

‡ 23rd March, 1589. *Recueil des choses memorables, &c.* depuis la Closure des Estats de Blois jusques a la mort de Henri III.

lity of the two Lorrain princes; but the league laughed him to scorn, and employed two doctors of the Sorbonne to inquire into his private life and conduct.* He found himself abandoned also by the Duke of Mercoeur, the brother of his consort, who joined the league with the whole of Brittanny, the parliament of Rennes excepted. In a word, his condition was desperate; he found his dominion reduced to very little more than the town in which he lived, and the prediction of his dying mother was recalled to his mind; he was, in fact, a King without a kingdom. He had been uniform in his hatred and opposition to the protestants; he had refused on several occasions to accept of their services on more equal terms; he now was compelled to join them for his personal safety.

CHAP. XLI.

REVIEW OF THE AFFAIRS OF THE HUGUENOTS;—MEETING AT ROCHELLE;—RECONCILIATION BETWEEN HENRY III. AND THE KING OF NAVARRE;—ATTACK UPON TOURS BY THE DUKE OF MAYENNE;—PARIS INVESTED BY THE ROYAL ARMIES.

THE important events, which in the course of 1588 succeeded each other with such rapidity at Paris and at Blois, have excluded the affairs of the Huguenots from our attention; it will therefore be necessary to

* Hist. du Parlement de Paris, ch. 30.

revert to the early part of that year, when we left the King of Navarre in rather unfortunate circumstances, in consequence of the dispersion of his German auxiliaries. It was useless for him to attempt keeping the field with his small force, and he retired to Rochelle, where his little court was occupied with his private affairs; and particularly with a marriage which he then contemplated with the Countess of Guiche. His faithful advisers succeeded in convincing him that in his situation such a measure might become an insuperable impediment in obtaining his rights to the crown after the death of Henry III. and he consented to adjourn the discussion for the space of two years. In the interval a change took place in his sentiments, and he never renewed the subject; the Countess of Guiche in fact had been superseded in his affections by the Marchioness of Guiercheville.*

The death of the Prince of Condé had afforded an opportunity to Lavardin, a catholic commander, to attack Marans, an important post, on account of its vicinity to Rochelle. Navarre made a spirited effort to relieve the garrison, but in vain. In the month of June he attacked it with success, and expelled the troops placed there by Lavardin. On the day the principal attack was made, the Huguenots were discerned to be at prayer, and the garrison directly exclaimed to one another, “they are at prayers and will beat us as at Courtras;” this prediction may in a measure have been realised by their own dejection.†

Later in the summer an expedition was planned

* *Hist. des Amours du Grand Alcandre*, at the beginning, and *Vie de D'Aubigné*, p. 94.

† *Mem. de M. Duplessis*, vol. i. p. 855. *Cayet*, liv. 1. p. 76.

for taking the town of St. Lazare on the mouth of the Loire. Duplessis Mornay was to conduct the maritime operations, and the King of Navarre was to lead the land forces. The troops were to embark at Beauvoir, and Navarre set out in that direction. But some time was lost in a fruitless attempt to take Clisson, a fortified town in his route, and when he arrived at Beauvoir in the beginning of October, the wind prevented his getting out. To compensate for the disappointment, he resolved on laying siege to the castle of that place, which was held by the catholics, and was well garrisoned and fortified.*

The castle was well defended, which compelled the besiegers to make great exertions; and the King of Navarre was always in the most dangerous and difficult posts. On one occasion he was out, surveying the surrounding country, and Villeserin the commander of the castle placed forty-five men in ambush on the road by which the King of Navarre would return. When he was within thirty paces, walking carelessly and conversing with D'Aubigné, all those men started up, and levelled their pieces at him. The King of Navarre's attendants immediately placed themselves before him, and shielded his person; and the assailants being so eager to kill the hope and support of the Huguenots, fired with great precipitation, and did but little execution. The Huguenots very soon became the assailants, and compelled the catholics to retreat. This circumstance was afterwards of great utility to the Huguenots, for when the governor found there was no chance of any help being sent to him, he offered to capitulate as the best way of avoiding Navarre's resentment for his

* Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 526.

recent attempt. The Duke of Nevers soon after coming into the province with his army, compelled the Huguenots to abandon their original design on St. Lazare; Navarre strengthened the garrison of the different surrounding towns, and returned again to Rochelle.*

While the states-general were assembled at Blois, the Huguenots held a meeting of their churches at Rochelle; the deputies met on the twelfth of November.† The ministers did not fail to reproach the King of Navarre with his improper conduct, and with his prodigality to his catholic friends, while he permitted his servants of the reformed religion to suffer extreme indigence; they charged him with having sold the Isle of Oberon to the catholics; and they dwelt with severity upon his shameless incontinency.‡ But the situation of affairs would not admit of the Huguenots being at variance with Navarre, nor could he dispense with their services, and the meeting was brought to unanimity by the proposal to send a deputation to Blois. The request addressed to the states-general was, that the King should restore to them (exiles for their religion) the privileges granted by the edict of January, 1561; that they should be reinstated in the enjoyment of their property and estates; and that a national council should be assembled when the doctors of both parties might in perfect safety calmly discuss the differences of their opinions, and solemnly decide upon the result.§ The temper of the majority of the deputies at the states-general destroyed all chance of this request obtaining any.

* Cayet, liv. 1. p. 87. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. pp. 129 et seq.

† Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 529.

‡ D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 133.

§ Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 4. p. 138.

consideration ; and its presentation only served to stimulate the more violent leaguers.

The King of Navarre was at St. Jean-d'Angely when he received the intelligence of Guise's death, on the third day after it had taken place. He was then engaged in an attack upon Niort ; and to the surprise of several of his officers, the news caused no change in his operations. The Duke of Nevers was besieging Ganache, a town held by the Huguenots, and this enterprise was considered a sort of counterpoise. St. Gelais commanded the party ; they approached the town very silently, and having placed their petards for bursting the gate, the ladders were set against the wall. The order preserved on this occasion could be equalled only by the resolution displayed. On their arrival the moon shone bright, and they were obliged to lay concealed waiting on the frozen ground till the moon was down ; on placing the ladders at the foot of the wall, a sentinel called out *Qui va là ?* but the silence they observed, and their adroitness in concealing themselves was such that they could hear the sentinel tell the patrol of the guard that he had heard some noise, but that it was nothing. Soon after they succeeded in mounting the wall, and the petards being discharged against the gate at the same time made an entrance for the rest of the party, and the town was completely in their possession after a short struggle. Five large and some small guns were found in the place.*

Ganache in the meantime was well defended. After a cannonade of four days, the Duke of Nevers

* 28 Dec. 1588. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 114. Hist. des derniers troubles, liv. 4. p. 155. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 157. De Thou, liv. 94.

ordered an assault, which the besieged repulsed with great firmness.* Navarre had set out to relieve the place, but was seized with a sudden illness, which at one time was so violent that his death was generally reported. His complaint was a pleurisy with violent fever, and he was taken ill at a village where no medical assistance could be had for two days.† The Duke of Nevers having offered favourable terms, and the besieged seeing no chance of being succoured, a capitulation was agreed to, and the garrison evacuated the town, taking with them their arms and baggage.‡ During the King of Navarre's illness, the Duke of Nevers had returned to Blois, as his presence there was likely to be more useful to the King of France; on his recovery he proposed to attack Brouage and Saintes, which he could then do with advantage, as the King's forces in those parts were very trifling. But Duplessis Mornay opposed his plan; “it is very well,” said he, “if we are to grow old in these marshes; but if you are ever to be King of France, you must direct your views elsewhere. The shortest of those sieges will detain you two months, and during that time France will be lost. But take the field with all your troops and cannon, attempt something of consequence, go towards the Loire and attack such places as Saumur. The King pressed on both sides will not venture to treat with Mayenne, his hands being stained with the blood of his brothers, and he will be forced to throw himself into your arms.”§

Navarre was convinced by this reasoning; and in order to make the King of France more ready to join

* 7 Jan. 1589. † Mem. de Duplessis Mornay, vol. i. p. 883.

‡ Mem. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 552. Mem. de Nevers, vol. i. p. 878. De Thou, liv. 94. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 138.

§ Vie de Mornay, p. 127.

him, he published a manifesto addressed to the three Estates of the kingdom ; in which he solemnly called upon them to quit the league, and warned them, that if they persisted in their rebellion, he was resolved, if the King called upon him, to take the field in his behalf, and he hoped by divine help to frustrate their designs; he publicly offered his protection to all towns and persons who would renounce their connexion with the league ; promising that there should be nothing changed in the police or in religion. He afterwards deplored the necessity of bearing arms in civil war ; "Would to God !" said he, " that I had never been a captain, since my apprenticeship was to be made at the expence of France. I am ready to ask peace of my lord the King ; repose for his kingdom and for mine. I have often been summoned to change my religion, but how ? with a dagger at my throat ! If you simply desire my salvation I thank you : but if you desire my conversion because you are afraid lest at some time I should constrain you, you are wrong."*

A reconciliation with Navarre was proposed to Henry III. by some of his advisers, but his aversion to the Huguenots prevented him from listening to it. He preferred even to purchase an ignominious peace of the league, and had written to that effect to the Duke of Lorrain. At last his council shewed him that he could no longer delay coming to some decision, for he would soon find himself alone between the two factions ; that he had done more to pacify the Pope than any King had done before, and therefore should think no more of his differences in that quarter ; that he was insulted by the courts of

* Mathieu, liv. 8. p. 734. It was dated 4 March, 1589.

Spain and Rome, and was in danger of suffering in his own person what had been done to his effigy in Paris and Toulouse ; that by availing himself of the help of the Huguenots, he could carry into effect his old threat of making use of one enemy to be avenged upon another ;* and that such a measure was not unprecedented, for many catholic Kings and Emperors had made use of infidels and heretics against their enemies. These arguments induced the King to consent to a treaty.†

The Duke of Epernon informed Navarre, of the King's willingness to conclude a treaty, and Sully was sent to court incognito.‡ Henry repeated to that messenger, that he wished to unite himself with the King of Navarre ; Sully, however, being aware of the King's fickle disposition, asked for a letter to his master, which Henry refused to give, “ for fear lest it should fall into the hands of the legate, or the Duke of Nevers ; and that notwithstanding his good will to him he could not prevent his falling into their hands, if they discovered that he had come to Tours.” Still the assurances he gave to Sully, and the firmness with which he addressed him, satisfied the King of Navarre, who from that time discontinued his hostile operations. “ Return to him,” said he to Sully, “ and take my letters to him, for I fear neither Morosini, nor Nevers.”§

* *De inimicis meis, vindicabo inimicos meos*, an expression which Henry frequently made use of.

† Davila, liv. 10. p. 44. Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 159.

‡ Although he was styled Rosny for several years after this period, I have uniformly called him by the name most familiar to us.

§ Mem. de Sully, liv. 3. .

The Duchess of Angoulême, Henry's natural sister, was the person who contributed principally to the conclusion of a treaty ; she was highly esteemed by both parties, and persuaded each to make concessions, which at first were positively refused.* Mornay concluded a treaty on the third of April, which stipulated that there should be a truce between the two kings for twelve months ; that they should make war in concert against the league, and that the Huguenots should have Saumur, an important passage on the Loire. It was also agreed that the treaty should not be made public till a considerable time after.† Henry was averse to the cession of Saumur, but the discussion was given up, in consequence of his discovering that De Guast who held the castle of Amboise, was in treaty with the league ; their emissaries having persuaded him that the King had accused him at Rome of having sacrificed the Cardinal of Guise to his private resentment ; and it became necessary to pacify him, and separate his prisoners. At the same time, the King learned that a plot was in agitation to gain the city of Tours for the league ; emissaries had spread a report that the place was to be delivered to the Huguenots, and the sedition was appeased with difficulty.‡

The Pope's legate and the Spanish ambassador were indignant, when they heard that negotiations were carrying on with the Huguenots ; the former made a remonstrance, and the latter abruptly quitted the court, and fixed his residence at Paris.§ As the King had assured the legate, that he had not con-

* Cayet, liv. 1. p. 165.

† Mem. de Duplessis Mornay, vol. i. p. 897. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 168.

‡ Davila, liv. 10. p. 50.

§ Ibid. p. 48.

sented to treat with the Huguenots, until he was compelled by the obstinacy of the Pope in refusing him absolution, and the refusals of the Lorrain princes to come to some arrangement, the legate intreated him to grant a delay of ten days, in which he might try to bring the Duke of Mayenne to terms. He offered, in the King's name, the government of Burgundy, and forty thousand crowns per annum to Mayenne, who was also to have the disposal of all vacant places in that province: the young Duke of Guise was offered the government of Champagne, with a pension of twenty thousand crowns. But he could make no impression on Mayenne, although for two days he endeavoured to persuade him to accept the King's offers. In speaking of the King, Mayenne constantly called him a wretch, and declared that he would not listen to any proposal from a perfidious man, who had neither faith nor honour; that he never would trust to the word of him, who had so cruelly murdered his brothers, and violated not only the public faith, but also the oath he had made upon the holy sacrament. The legate finding he could not succeed with the Duke of Mayenne, was as unwilling to remain with the King, as to encourage the rebellious leaguers; he therefore decided on quitting France, and soon after went to Rome, to give an account of his legation.*

The two kings met in the park of Tours, on the 30th of April, amidst the acclamations of an immense multitude. The King of Navarre was sometime in deciding whether he should trust his person to him, who was an avowed enemy of the protestants; but as Catherine de Medicis and the Duke of Guise no

* Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. ii. pp. 160—165.

longer existed, he banished all suspicion from his mind. As he approached Tours, he stopped on the banks of the river Cher, and conversed with his gentlemen before he crossed it. Several of his old captains were averse to his going; they argued that so desperate were the King's affairs, that he would be glad to obtain the Pope's absolution, even by sacrificing the life of the King of Navarre. They would not consent to expose him on the promise of a prince, whose word could not be trusted.* At length Navarre broke the conversation, by saying, "Come on, the resolution is taken; we must not think any more about it." He crossed the river immediately, and went to meet the King of France.†

Henry had waited sometime for his arrival, and shewed great displeasure at the suspicions entertained by Navarre's friends. The crowd was so great, that it was sometime before they could approach; when they met, the King of Navarre went on his knee; but Henry III. raised him up, called him his dear brother, and embraced him several times, while the people shouted *Vivent les Rois.*‡ They separated in the evening; but early next day, Navarre visited the King in his chamber, accompanied only by a page: this mark of confidence completely dissipated every unfavourable feeling in Henry's mind. The King of Navarre derived equal satisfaction; and wrote to Mornay, "the ice has been broken, not without a number of warnings, that if I went it would cost my life."§ Mornay replied, "Sire!

* De Thou, liv. 95. Le Grain, liv. 4. Perefixe, liv. 1.

† Mem. de Sully, liv. 3.

‡ Cayet, liv. 1. p. 186. De Thou, liv. 95.

§ Mem. de Duplessis Mornay, vol. i. p. 901.

you have done what you ought to do, but what no one could have advised you to do.”*

The greatest unanimity pervaded the two armies; Catholics and Huguenots forgot their injuries, and different nobles who were at variance, agreed to lay aside their disputes, and unite to serve the King. The war had commenced in Normandy, by the Duke of Montpensier besieging Falaise, held by the league; and Mayenne on his side had obtained possession of Vendôme. This movement made it probable that he would attack Tours; and it was fortunate for the King of France that he had been joined by the Huguenots; but for their assistance, he would have been made a prisoner by the leaguers. Mayenne had agents even among the King's personal attendants; he received information of the reconciliation between him and Navarre, and also of the weak state of the guards at Tours; and his aim was to get possession of Henry's person before the Huguenots had all arrived, for the King of Navarre had gone to meet the infantry of his army. Some of the courtiers who were in confederacy with Mayenne, engaged to persuade the King to take a ride, when an ambuscade would be prepared to seize him. If that plan failed, Mayenne was immediately to attack one of the suburbs of Tours, and draw thither the King's forces; the leaguers in the city were then to take arms, seize on the principal posts, and shut the gates before the King could return; it would then be hardly possible for him to escape. On the night of the 7th of May, the Duke marched eleven leagues, and early the following morning he posted some cavalry at the spot agreed upon. The King went out on horseback,

* *Vie de Mornay*, p. 135.

accompanied by those who were in the secret, and was proceeding direct to the place of ambush, when a miller called out to him, “ Go back, Sire ! your enemies are close at hand.” The King turned his horse, galloped back to Tours, and immediately gave orders for putting the town in a state of defence.*

Mayenne attacked the faubourg St. Symphoriad, and after fighting for several hours, obtained possession of it. The town seemed likely to fall into his power, and Henry's condition was desperate. Crillon at the head of the infantry, made an obstinate stand against the assailants, and boldly disputed every inch of ground. But the Duke's force was too great to be driven back ; and, in addition, he received a reinforcement of cavalry which the Chevalier d'Autemalle brought to him. The only chance of preserving the town then rested on the defence of the bridge. Cannon were placed upon it, but the hatred which animated the leaguers, was fiercer than the fire from the batteries, and they advanced to the foot of the bridge, where a furious combat took place. Henry fought there with great courage. He did not fail to encourage those around him, for every thing depended on their exertion. “ On your bravery this day,” said he, “ depends the fate of your unhappy King.” By wonderful efforts of courage, the defence was prolonged till evening when Chatillon arrived with five hundred chosen men, sent forward by the King of Navarre, who had received the news of Mayenne's attack and was hastening on with his main body. This seasonable reinforcement arrested the progress of the assailants ; and other troops

* Cayet, liv. 1. pp. 186-187.

arriving the next day, the Duke of Mayenne thought fit to retire.*

It is said that when the leaguers saw the Huguenots, they called out to them, “Retire white scarf ! Retire Chatillon ! we are not against you, but against your father’s murderers !” But the Huguenots were not to be deceived, and Chatillon called out that they were traitors, and that when the service of his prince and the state was concerned, he laid aside all private interests.† The royalists lost near four hundred men in defending the place, while the leaguers had not more than a hundred killed. The Duke of Mayenne glutted his vengeance on the dead body of St. Mallin, one of those who had murdered his brother. The hands and head were cut off ; the body was hung up by the heels ; and the head was ordered to be put up at Montfaucon, with a notice stating, that he had ordered him to be put to death, and that the body ought to be accompanied by that of Henry III. the author of the murder. The troops committed dreadful excesses during the time they were in the faubourg ; they robbed all the churches and subjected the women and girls to violence.‡

The historian De Thou was at Tours at the time, and confirms the preceding statement in a great measure : but he expresses his doubts of Mayenne’s having killed St. Mallin in the way he announced it. He says that he and Chatillon conversed a great deal with the inhabitants about what they had seen and experienced, and that not one of

* Davila, liv. 10. p. 74.

† Journal de Henri III. D’Aubigné.—*Hist. Univ. in luc.*

‡ Davila, liv. 10. p. 76. Journal de Henri III. p. 114.

them mentioned the execution. Mayenne's bulletin contained many things which were proved to be false; among others that Crillon and Rubeaupré were killed, and that Marshal d'Aumont was dangerously wounded; it is not therefore surprising that he should have exaggerated a statement calculated to make him popular with the league.*

From the time Henry had been joined by the King of Navarre, his affairs took a different turn; and the bravery he displayed on the defence of Tours, was a comfort to his real friends, who feared that all his energy was extinct. Many persons now joined his party, who had kept aloof while they considered his cause hopeless; and many places which had joined the league, again returned to their duty. Several towns in the Orléanais submitted to him; Poissy, Meulan, and Estampes were reduced; and in capitulating, they declared they wanted no other security than Navarre's word, which was worth more than the written promises of Henry III. Senlis also had declared in favour of the King, and the Duke of Aumale sustained a defeat by La Noue, while he was occupied in besieging it; the Duke of Montpensier had likewise been successful in Normandy. Still the King was desirous of going further from Paris, and it required great persuasion to keep him from retiring to Limoges.†

While he was at Estampes he received intelligence of the papal excommunication having been issued against him; he regretted it very much, for having always exerted himself for the religion,

* De Thou, liv. 95.

† Cayet, liv. 1. p. 207—212. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 171. Brantôme, vol. ix. p. 333. Davila, liv. 10. pp. 77 et seq.

he considered it unjust to be excommunicated because he would not be murdered by rebellious subjects; while others who had sacked Rome, and imprisoned the Pope himself had not been so treated. “Sire,” said Navarre to him, “those persons were victorious, and for that reason your majesty should strive to be conqueror, for then your absolution will follow as a matter of course; but if we are overcome, we shall all die heretics and excommunicate.”*

The persuasions of the King of Navarre, and the great change in the state of his affairs, decided Henry to attempt the siege of Paris. Sancy had been into Switzerland, and was on his march to join him with a large body of troops levied there.† The royal army amounted altogether to near forty thousand men. Pontoise was taken on the twenty-fifth of July, and a few days after, they took possession of the bridge of St. Cloud, where Henry III. fixed his head quarters. As he surveyed Paris from the height, he is said to have given vent to his feelings, and to have vowed complete vengeance against that rebellious city.‡ The King of Navarre took his quarters at Meudon, and spread his forces along the south side of the city as far as Charenton. The leaguers were in the greatest perplexity, for at the sight of the royal army, many concealed royalists had declared themselves openly: a general attack was decided upon, and it was to be made in a few days; but in the interval Henry III. was assassinated.

* Davila, liv. 10. p. 87.

† Cayet, liv. 1. p. 216. De Thou, liv. 96. *Et discours de Harlay de Sancy*, p. 38. This piece is inserted in the *Memoirs d'Etat de Villeroy*, vol. v. of the Amsterdam Edition.

‡ Davila, liv. 10. p. 93.

CHAP. XLII.

ASSASSINATION OF HENRY III. BY JAMES CLEMENT;—
ACCESSION OF HENRY IV.

THE approach of the two Kings to Paris filled the league with alarm. The army was reduced by desertions; the Duke of Mayenne had taken every possible measure for making a good defence, and bastions were thrown up, and trenches were dug for that purpose; but as there were numbers of persons in the city, who (being only retained by fear from declaring their opinions, would be sure to join the King when he presented himself), very little hope was entertained of repelling the expected attack. As a last resource, Mayenne had decided on dashing into the ranks of the royal army with a body of devoted followers, and if escape should then appear impracticable, he resolved to seek in a glorious death, a refuge from the disgrace which appeared almost inevitable.* The ecclesiastics redoubled their efforts to inflame the public mind, and inspire that enthusiasm which the emergency required. The preachers had for a long time declared, that it would be meritorious in any one to assassinate the tyrant; and from the time the two Kings had met at Tours, that abominable notion had more earnestly been dwelt upon. The success which attended the King's operations in June and July appeared likely to restore

* Davila, liv. 10. p. 93.

him to the exercise of his authority ; their own safety therefore made them seek for some bold or fanatical spirit, who would execute the horrible commission.

A young dominican, named James Clement, distinguished for his violent enthusiasm, even amongst the most enthusiastic of the league, was the person they employed. His passions were strong, his principles libertine, and his fanaticism unequalled. He constantly went armed in the processions ; and as he was vehement in calling for war against the heretics, he obtained the name of *Captain Clement*. He was fully imbued with the blind zeal of his party ; and as he looked upon Henry III. as a murderer, anathematised by the church, he wanted but little to excite him to the task. His brother monks fearing he might grow cool, and reflect upon the enormity of the crime in contemplation, made use of the following stratagem. An opening was made in his cell, and, in the night, a man surrounded with a blaze of light, descended and woke up Clement. Surprise and agitation prevented him from recognising either the figure or the voice of the person, who was probably a brother monk, for it would have been dangerous to entrust the secret to a stranger. It appeared to Clement to be really an angel, as it was also publicly declared to be by the Dominican monks.* “James!” said he, “I am the messenger of the Almighty come to inform thee that the tyrant of France is to die by thy hand ; the martyr’s crown is prepared for thee, prepare thyself also.” The phantom then disappeared. Clement was unable fully to comprehend this vision, and in the morning went to the prior of his

* Discours véritable de l’estrange et subite mort de Henri de Valois, advenue par permission divine, lui estant à St. Clou, &c. Par un religieux de l’ordre des Jacobins.—*Troyes*, 1589.

convent, Father Burgoing : “a man,” says the writer before quoted, “very scientific, and well versed in the holy scriptures.” After relating frankly what he had seen, Clement asked the prior if it would be offensive to God to kill a King who had no religion, and who sought to oppress his poor subjects, thirsting after innocent blood, and abounding in every possible vice. “Burgoing told him, “that, in reality, we were forbidden by God to commit homicide; but as the King in question was a man set apart from the church, practising execrable tyrannies, and who seemed bent on being an eternal scourge to France, he considered that whosoever put him to death would do a very holy and commendable thing.” He then directed his attention to Judith, Ehud and Jael; and compared the deliverance which would result from it to that of Israel from Egypt.

Clement’s resolution being confirmed, he prepared for the King’s assassination by fasting and prayers. On one occasion, when he was praying in the church, some monks concealed behind the principal altar, called out to him through a tube—“James Clement! kill the King!” No doubt could any longer exist as to the authority of his holy mission; he confessed, and took the sacraments, and then presented himself to the Dukes of Mayenne and Aumale, who were far from disapproving of his project.*

But the Duchess of Montpensier no sooner heard of it than she sent for Clement. She had maintained her boldness when the heads of the league were trembling with apprehension; and she contributed very essentially to keep Clement to the resolutions he had formed. Clement frequently visited the

* Hist. de la Sorbonne, par l’Abbé Duvesnet, vol. ii. p. 28.

Duchess, and she soon observed how sensible he was to the allurements of pleasure. A beautiful woman, a princess, sister of two martyrs, who displayed all her attractions to gain his complete devotion, could not fail of captivating the senses of the young monk. He related to her his vision and the different calls he had received from heaven for the work, adding, that his confessor had conjured him to yield to the divine inspiration, but that he had delayed executing his commission on account of an angel telling him to wait till the tyrant came before he gave the blow. The Duchess is stated to have addressed him in a most eloquent manner, appealing by turns to his fanaticism, his ambition, and his passions. She entreated him to take pity on France, and save the nation from heretics and idolaters, by a number of measures which she proposed should be adopted; his death was by no means certain, and that after such an exploit a Cardinal's hat would be the certain recompence from the church, while heavenly laurels would assuredly reward him if he perished.*

It is plainly hinted by many writers, that the Duchess obtained Clement's promise to commit this crime by yielding to the violence of his passion: but it was not the interest of that princess to gratify his desires; she might have given him a promise, in order to stimulate him to the work; but upon that we can only form conjectures, for Clement had no time to boast of his good fortune, and the Duchess is not likely to have been her own accuser.

A monk named Mergy was employed to buy the

* De Thou, liv. 96. at large. Davila, liv. 10. p. 95. et Lacte-telle.—*Hist. des guerres de religion.*

knife that was to be used on the occasion, and which was consecrated with considerable ceremony.* A letter from the president Harlay was procured to serve as an introduction for Clement; it is, however, a matter of doubt, whether it was really that person's writing, obtained under some pretence, or a forgery. It has been said that a packet, addressed to the King, was brought out of the Bastille, by a monk who officiated in that prison; and that on the proposal of Bussy-le-Clerc, it was resolved that Clement should be the bearer of it. "Let the worst happen," said one of the Sixteen, "it will only be the hanging of a monk."† But the account which was addressed to a friend by La Guesle, attorney-general, to the parliament, gives the substance of the letter brought by Clement, and it has every appearance of being a fabrication.‡ He was also supplied with a passport signed by the Count de Brienne.§

Thus furnished, Clement set out for St. Cloud, the last day of July, 1589; well satisfied, if he succeeded in stabbing the King, that he should have the martyr's crown or a bishopric, and the favours of the Duchess of Montpensier. The Jesuits took considerable interest in this undertaking; Clement was a great deal with them, and some of them accompanied him a short distance out of Paris, when he set out for the royal camp.|| He was stopped by the piquets of the King of Navarre's army; but as he declared he

* Hist. de la Sorbonne, vol. ii. p. 29.

† Hist. des Conspirations des Jesuites.

‡ Journal de Henri III. vol. i. p. 124.

§ Mathieu, liv. 8. p. 772.

|| Anti-Cotton, p. 84. The writer of which declares it to be a fact known to two thousand persons then living (A. D. 1610).

had letters for his majesty, he was allowed to pass on. At St. Cloud he addressed the Duke of Angoulême,* who told him that he could not see the King : he was afterwerds referred to La Guesle, who questioned him at length.† Clement made a plausible tale, which, however, ought not to have deceived him so completely ; for as he knew the president Harlay was in the Bastille, he might have confused the monk by his inquiries ; the necessity of extreme caution in allowing him to approach the King would then have been apparent.

The substance of Clement's account was, that the King's faithful subjects in the city could not openly act in his behalf ; but that whenever his majesty came to Paris they would be ready to seize one of the gates and admit him ; he added, that he had further information, which he could only communicate to the King himself in private. La Guesle went to inform the King of what he had heard, and sent Clement to sup with his servants, where he ate heartily, and answered their various questions with great coolness, although they were chiefly in allusion to his attempt.‡ After supper he fell into a sound sleep, when some one had the curiosity to examine his breviary, which lay beside him ; it was open at the history of Judith, which part had become soiled from frequent use. This circumstance was sufficient to create suspicion, but his profound sleep quieted those who were charged to watch him.§

* Natural son of Charles IX. by Marie Touchet ; at this time he was only Count d'Auvergne, but in history he is best known under his superior title.

† Mathieu, liv. 8. p. 773.

‡ Lettre de M. La Guesle, et Davila, liv. 10. p. 96.

§ Hist. de la Sorbonne, vol. ii. p. 30.

Although the King had received a note a few days previous, warning him against an attempt on his life, he persisted in giving Clement an audience the next morning.* The monk stated that his communication could not be made in the presence of any one beside the King ; La Guesle and Bellegarde, however, refusing to leave the room, Henry took Clement aside to a window. He went on his knee to present the letter of introduction to the King, who inclined his head to hear the confidential communication. Clement took the opportunity to plunge his knife into the King's abdomen. "Wretch!" said Henry, drawing the knife from the wound, "what have I done, that you should assassinate me?" and as he spoke he struck the murderer with it in the face. La Guesle ran to the spot, and struck Clement with his sword ; the noise brought in some attendants, who immediately dispatched the miscreant, although La Guesle exhorted them to take him alive.† The body was then exposed in order to be recognised, for many thought it was some soldier of the league disguised as a monk ; and the historian Mathieu relates, "that if he had not been recognised by Francis Dumont and some others, there were many persons who would have contended it was some Huguenot."‡ There can, however, exist no doubt of Clement's identity. The Dominican who has already been mentioned details the treatment which his dead body received ; it was torn asunder by four horses, and afterwards burned, "but his soul, he adds, did not fail to ascend

* Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 409. Grammont, a leaguer, met the Duke d'Angoulême the day before ; and seeing him cheerful, said, "to-morrow you will not be so merry."—*Mem. du Duc d'Angoulême*, p. 3.

† Lettre de M. La Guesle.

‡ Mathieu, liv. 8. p. 774.

to heaven with the blessed ; as to that of Henry of Valois, I refer to what is known of him, and leave the judgment to God. You have now before you the account of the death of Henry of Valois ; and how opportunely this poor monk undertook our deliverance, not fearing death, if he could give liberty to the church and the people. I pray God that the same may befall all those who are against the catholic religion, and who now unlawfully besiege us. Amen.”*

The King was put to bed, and his wounds examined. At first the surgeons pronounced them not dangerous, and letters were sent off to the governors of the provinces, containing an account of the circumstance ; that sent to Duplessis Mornay, governor of Saumur, has been handed down to us. After describing the event, the letter states ; “ but if it please God, it will be nothing ; and in a few days he will give me both my former health, and the victory over my enemies, of which I am desirous of informing you both to acquaint you with the wickedness of my enemies, and to assure you of the hope of my speedy recovery.”† For some time great hopes were entertained that the wounds would not prove fatal ; but when the abdomen was examined a second time it was found that the intestines were pierced, and from that moment the King prepared for death. His confessor refused to give him absolution on account of the anathema he had incurred, and said that he must conform to the Pope’s demand before his sins could be absolved. Henry replied, “ I am the eldest son of the catholic, apostolic and Roman

* Discours véritable, &c.

† Mem. de Duplessis Mornay, vol. i. p. 926.

church, and such I wish to die. I promise before God, and before all men, that my chief desire is to satisfy his holiness in every thing which he can wish of me." This satisfied the confessor, who gave him absolution and administered the sacraments of the eucharist and extreme unction.*

The King of Navarre had been early informed of the fatal event; he arrived at St. Cloud, accompanied by twenty-five gentlemen.† When the King's religious exercises were concluded, his chamber-door was thrown open, and all the nobility approached to hear his dying counsel. He deplored the unhappy state in which he left France; he begged they would leave to God the vengeance of his death; exhorted them all to be united, and declared the King of Navarre his legitimate successor; he recommended also that the discussion of their religious differences should be deferred till the meeting of the states-general. "Adieu! my friend," said the King in conclusion, "turn your tears into prayers, and pray for me." He then embraced the King of Navarre; dwelt upon the danger there would be for him if it became common to assassinate kings; and concluded by exhorting him to renounce the protestant religion. "Be assured, my dear brother," said he, "that you will never be King of France, unless you become a catholic, and humble yourself to the church." His attendants then withdrew, and he occupied the remainder of his moments in religious exercises; he lived till three o'clock the following morning, the second of August, when as he was repeating the

* Davila, liv. 10. p. 98. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 223, et Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, liv. 3.

† Mem. de Sully, liv. 3.

Miserere he died without a struggle, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and the fifteenth of his reign.*

The King of Navarre had retired to Meudon after receiving the dying monarch's farewell. In the middle of the night an express arrived to inform him that he must hasten to St. Cloud, if he wished to see the King any more. He immediately took horse, and when he arrived at St. Cloud the first thing he heard was, that Henry III. was dead. When his arrival was known in the place, the Scotch guards came to offer him their homage, and proclaim him their King.† Henry IV. proceeded to his predecessor's bed side, and addressed all present, who were indignant at the malignity of the league in resorting to such means; while they lamented the loss of a prince who had been particularly kind to most of them. The new King was very much affected, and as he spoke, his words were often interrupted by his sighs. “Tears,” said he, “will not restore him to life; the true proof of fidelity is to avenge him; for my part, I will sacrifice my life to it; we are all Frenchmen, and there is nothing to make distinctions among us in the duty we owe to the memory of our King, and the service of our country.”‡

But it was not long before Henry IV. discovered, that he had yet considerable difficulties to overcome. Most of the catholic noblemen protested against his being acknowledged to be King; some objected from scruples of conscience, but several were in hopes of establishing an independent authority in the pro-

* Davila, liv. 10. p. 99. Hist. des derniers troubles, vol. ii. p. 7. De Thou, liv. 96.

† Mem. de Sully, liv. 3.

‡ Mathieu, vol. ii. liv. 1. p. 5.

vinces or towns, where they had influence.* Henry took his two confidants, La Force and D'Aubigné, into an adjoining room, and asked for their advice. La Force declined speaking, but D'Aubigné addressed the King nearly as follows : " You stand, Sire, more in want of advice than of consolation ; and your present conduct will decide the remainder of your life ; will make you a King or nothing. You are surrounded by men who tremble while they threaten you, and who conceal their private fears under general pretences. If you suffer such things to influence you, what will you not fear ? And if you attempt to overcome the difficulty by yielding, who will not tyrannize over you ? There are in the court and the army two sorts of persons ; those who are resolved to support the King, and maintain his right to the crown ; and those whom the pretext of religion makes uncertain and doubtful ; and you must not give them time to deliberate. You are sure of the protestant nobility and the troops under them. Marshal Biron and the catholic captains under him have no thoughts of leaving you, for the share they had in the death of the Guises secures them. Call on Biron to engage the Swiss to acknowledge you ; dispatch Givry and Humieres,† to gain partisans among the nobles of the Isle of France and Picardy. The Duke of Epernon is the most influential person in the army, but he is sure not to join the league, who are as much his enemies as yours. Be assured, Sire, that you have the superiority of force, and that your vigour and firmness will bring back every one to his duty."‡

* Perefixe, liv. 1. p. 90.

† Charles de Humieres, killed at the siege of Ham, 1595.

‡ D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 184.

Biron was then sent for, and the King said to him, “ The time is come, my cousin, when your hand must help to place the crown on my head. It will ill suit both your disposition and mine, for me to animate you by solicitations. I intreat you at once, to persuade the Swiss to take the oath of allegiance to me; then come and serve me, as a father and a friend.”* Biron went immediately, and with Sancy’s assistance he had less difficulty than he had anticipated. The Swiss moreover agreed to defer the payment of their wages for sometime, as the King’s finances were in a very crippled state.†

The catholic nobility, in the meantime, had held a consultation; some were for demanding the King’s immediate conversion, and others were satisfied with his promise of abjuring within a given time.† Some were desirous of prohibiting the exercise of the reformed religion, while more tolerant measures were recommended by others. They had considerable difficulty in coming to an agreement, upon the proposals they should make to the King; at last the Seigneur D’O. was appointed to speak their sentiments. He told the King that the noblesse were all willing to acknowledge him for their sovereign, if he would embrace the catholic religion; intimated that they would prefer death to having a Huguenot for their King, and declared that his right to the crown depended on his professing the ancient faith: he also added, that there was no fear of alienating the Huguenots from his cause, as they would be con-

* D’Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 185.

† Brantôme, vol. ix. p. 150. De Thou, liv. 97, et Discours de Harlay de Sancy, p. 48.

† Discours de Harlay de Sancy, p. 51.

tented with the exercise of their religion. This proposition was very complimentary to the loyalty of the protestants ; but Henry IV. had too much honour thus to abandon the companions of his distress ; his religion was far from being fervent, it sat but lightly on him as his libertine principles prove, and he could then, as he did afterwards, have gone to mass without many scruples of conscience ; but his soul was above a meanness, even to obtain a crown. He answered the deputation with spirit ; reproached them with their disregard of the late King's dying injunctions, and asked what opinion they could have of him, to expect he could change his religion so suddenly ? Should he then be worthy of their confidence ? He gave them to understand that the subject should be maturely deliberated in the states-general, or in a national council, to the decisions of which he would submit ; in the meantime he hoped he should be supported by all catholics who loved their country or their honour ; and that all those who would not have a little patience, had his free permission to retire where they pleased.*

As Henry finished speaking, Givry entered, and after kissing his hand, announced the adhesion of the army, who had proclaimed him their King. " Sire !" said he, " you are the sovereign of the brave, and will be abandoned only by cowards.† This circumstance hastened the decision of many of the catholics, who had expected to force the King to make great concessions. The Dukes of Montpensier and Angoulême had not concealed their ill humour, notwithstanding their connexion with the crown ; and the latter would scarcely deign to salute the King.‡ But

* D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 185. et seq.

† D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 187. ‡ Davila, liv. 10. p. 103.

when Henry's friends appeared sufficiently numerous to maintain his cause, their difficulties diminished, and they consented to acknowledge him, on condition that he should be instructed in the catholic religion within six months ; that he should restore the Romish worship where it had been suppressed ; that he should place the clergy in the full enjoyment of their property ; and that he should give no appointment to the Huguenots : there were some other articles respecting the public rights and liberties which were matters of course.

The warmth of some of the Huguenots made the catholic nobility more resolute in requiring a positive obligation from the King ; for otherwise they feared that the reformed religion would be encouraged, to the destruction of their church. La Noue endeavoured, but in vain, to persuade them to be reasonable. No one could doubt the sincerity of his protestantism ; yet he candidly told the King that it would be scarcely possible for him to obtain his rights unless he became a catholic ; but he insisted on the change being made in a respectable manner, to avoid any thing which might prejudice those who had so long supported him. A number of zealous and violent Huguenots however insisted on his remaining with them, and contended that their party was sufficient to establish him upon the throne.* Duplessis Mornay was confined to his bed at Saumur, but though he could not personally advise his sovereign, he addressed him a memorial for his guidance : he accompanied the memorial with a letter, and both reflect great credit upon him, as a loyal servant, a skilful politician, and a sincere christian. “ Many difficulties,”

* *Davila*, liv. 10. p. 111.

says he, “ present themselves in your affairs, as your majesty will perceive by my memorial; time will clear up a part of them, and your servants the rest. God who has conducted you, Sire, to the throne, will establish you thereon; only let your majesty be grateful, and ascribe to him all the glory.”† In the memorial Duplessis writes, “ The catholics are alarmed for their religion; a declaration must be published to satisfy them: the substance should announce, that there should be no innovation on the catholic religion; and because on the other hand, the protestants must not be offended, certain expressions must be agreed upon to be used, whenever they are spoken of. It is requisite that you should write to all the churches, and to the governors of the places where the reformed religion is exercised, enjoining them to conduct themselves more moderately than ever, both in speech and behaviour; to repress the insolence of the populace, and to be on terms of peace and union with the catholics, otherwise in some parts there will be danger of scandal. The regulations for the preservation of the churches and relics, and the maintenance of the service, must be enforced more strictly than ever. His majesty may be requested to restore the mass at Niort and other places; that will be a reason for granting the request of the protestants, when they apply for liberty of worship.” The memorial recommended also a proclamation calling upon all good Frenchmen to help punish the late King’s assassination; a declaration offering pardon to all who would submit within a certain time, and a representation to the Pope, shewing him the danger to which he exposed the See of Rome,

† Mem. de Duplessis Morlay, vol. ii. p. 1.

in irritating and exasperating him, by his bulls and anathemas ; “ the example of Henry, King of England, may be proposed to him ; he was by such means placed in the necessity of entirely cutting off the communication between the kingdom and the Roman See. The (French) ambassadors should persuade the princes, at whose courts they reside, to send persons of distinction to salute his majesty, as that will give him authority among the people, &c.”*

From the liberal sentiments which the preceding memorial conveys, it is to be regretted that the writer was absent. His paper did not reach the King till after he had concluded the affair, by taking an oath to the conditions already mentioned. Had Duplessis been present he would have had sufficient influence over his friends to restrain the eagerness of their demands, and much jealous feeling would have been avoided in consequence. A treaty, founded on these conditions, was signed by the King on the fourth of August, when all the nobles made a declaration of allegiance, with the exception of the Duke of Epernon and Louis de L'Hopital, Marquis of Vitry. Epernon retired to his government of Saintonge, with six thousand infantry, and twelve hundred horsemen, a reduction which the King's army could ill afford.† On leaving the camp he told his sovereign that his conscience would not permit him to stay ; but it is generally considered that his reasons were altogether selfish ; having enjoyed the highest distinction under Henry III., he could not consent to remain in an army where his military consequence would be eclipsed by Biron, d'Aumont, and La Noue ;

* Mem. de Duplessis Mornay, vol. ii. p. 4.

† Davila, liv. 10. p. 114.

he might also fear that the King would desire the loan of part of the immense sums he was known to have amassed.* Vitry appears to have acted from motives really conscientious; he joined the party of the league, but previously gave up the government of Dourdan, a town which the late King had confided to him;† and he returned to Henry's support, directly he was informed of his having abjured.‡

The King lost no time in arranging his affairs; his feeling was for attacking Paris, but his forces were so diminished that he could not think of making the attempt.§ For after Epernon had quitted him several other nobles did the same, and a considerable number of the catholic soldiers went to their homes.|| He addressed letters to the different parliaments; appointed a time for assembling the states-general; and sent an offer of accommodation to Mayenne, which was rejected.¶ For his military operations he consulted with Biron, d'Aumont, La Neue, and Montpensier. At first it was proposed to retire beyond the Loire; but that measure appearing too great a concession to the league, it was resolved that the army should be divided into three bodies; one under the Duke of Longueville, to protect Picardy from the Spaniards; another under Marshal d'Aumont, to be a check upon Champagne; the third

* Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 219.

† Perefixe, liv. 2. p. 95.

‡ Mem. de Nevers, vol. ii. p. 632.

§ It was proposed to place the body of the murdered King on the bridge of St. Cloud; as the soldiers passed by it they were to take an oath to avenge his death, and then set out to attack Paris.—*Discours de Harlay de Sancy*, p. 56.

|| Davila, liv. 10. p. 115.

¶ Mem. d'Etat de Villeroy, vol. i. p. 148. Davila, liv. 10. p. 119.

was commanded by the King himself, in Normandy, to be more ready to communicate with England. But before the forces separated the late King's body was carried to Compeigne for temporary interment. The situation of affairs prevented its being carried to St. Denis, and the army of the league making preparations for taking the field, there was no time to be lost in ceremonials; the body was in consequence placed in the principal church, without any display of pomp. The King immediately set out for Normandy, where he made an auspicious commencement, being joined by one Rolet, a gentleman of great courage and experience; he immediately took the oath of allegiance to Henry, and gave him possession of the Pont-de-l'Arche, which commands the river three leagues above Rouen.*

CHAP. XLIII.

REJOICINGS OF THE LEAGUE AT THE DEATH OF HENRY III. ;—BATTLE OF ARQUES ;—ATTACK ON THE SUBURBS OF PARIS.

WHILE Henry IV. was engaged in discussions with the catholic nobility, Paris was the scene of the most fanatical rejoicing. It has been said, that the event was first made known to the Parisians by the dying expression of a gentleman who was killed in a single

* Davila, liv. 10. Cayet, liv. 1. Perefice, liv. 2.

combat on the neutral ground. Such encounters were common at this period, while hostile armies were near each other; and John de L'isle Marivaut, a royalist, and Claude de Marolles, a leaguer, had agreed to break a lance on the second of August.* Marivaut, indignant at the King's assassination, went to the place appointed, with a hope of avenging his sovereign on the person whom he was to encounter: he was on the ground before the time agreed on, and refused to use the lances brought, which he said were too light. Marolles consented to his using a heavier lance, but kept a light one for himself. After the ceremonies usual at a tournament the signal was given, and the champions spurred their horses: Marivaut's superior strength nearly threw his antagonist from his horse, but being near sighted he could not wear a close helmet, and received a mortal blow by Marolles' spear going into his eye. He did not live fifteen minutes afterwards; but before he expired he said, "that even if he had been conqueror, he should have been unhappy to have survived the King, his master." This announced to the league that Clement's enterprise had been successful.†

In the meantime, the Duchess of Montpensier was waiting with anxiety to learn the result of the measure in which she had taken so much interest. The delay of a day had caused her great uneasiness. She might fancy the monk had been arrested and put to the torture: and if the part she had taken in encouraging him should be made known, it would be scarcely possible for her to be protected from the

* The Duc d'Angoulême speaks of this duel in his memoirs: he describes Marolles as unequalled in the management of a lance.

† Cayet, liv. I. p. 258. Brantome, vol. ii. p. 73, et Journal de Henri IV. vol. i. p. 8. (vol. xlvi. of Petitot's collection.)

vengeance of the King, who would immediately attack the city. She waited near the gate leading to St. Cloud, and when the intelligence was brought to her she repeatedly embraced the bearer of the news. "Ah! my friend," said she, "is it indeed so? is the tyrant, is the monster dead? I am vexed but at one thing; that before he died, he did not know that it was I who directed the blow."* The people immediately gave themselves up to an excess of joy. Hymns of thanksgiving were sung in the churches; the Dominicans had a *Te Deum*; bonfires were lighted up, and the black scarf, which had been worn by the league since Guise's death, was exchanged for green, the original colour:† portraits of Clement were exposed to the veneration of the public; he was styled a saint and a martyr; and all those who bore any relationship to him were enriched by public contributions and alms. His statue was placed in the cathedral with an inscription, *St. James Clement, pray for us!* His mother was treated with the greatest distinction; she was lodged at the house of the Duchess of Montpensier, and dined at her table. The Pope, Sixtus V. pronounced a studied panegyric on Clement; he began his discourse with a quotation from the Psalms: "this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes;" he declared the deed to be super-human, as so glorious a work could only be effected by the immediate direction of the Almighty, and placed it on a level with the most remarkable incidents in sacred history; at the same time he pronounced the deceased King to be unworthy of Christian burial.‡

* *Journal de Henri IV.* p. 3.

† *Davila*, liv. 10. p. 100. *Mem. du Duc d'Angoulême*, p. 22.

‡ *Hist. des derniers troubles*, vol. ii. p. 8. *De Thou*, liv. 96.

Mem. de Nevers, vol. ii. p. 5. In the year 1600 Cardinal D'Ossat

These, however, were the results of a blind feeling greatly excited, and the same people who then joined in such outrageous conduct would, under a change of circumstances, go to the opposite extreme. But the assassination of Henry III. becomes of more importance, when it is viewed as the result of the papal excommunication under which he laboured. The lofty pretensions of the Vatican were involved in this affair; the Pope had declared Henry to be fallen from his dignity, and as an enemy of the church he might be put to death with impunity. The Jesuits have stoutly defended the reputation of this fanatic, and in a work* published with the approbation of Aquaviva, the general of the order, we find the following passage: "James Clement studied theology in a college of his order, when being informed that he was permitted to kill a tyrant, he deeply wounded Henry III. in the abdomen with a poisoned knife. Dreadful spectacle! memorable deed! and of rare occurrence; but by which princes may learn that the impiety of their undertakings will not remain unpunished; that their authority is powerless from the time their subjects cease to revere them. Clement congratulated himself in the midst of wounds and stabs, for having by his blood secured the liberty of his country. The assassination of the King obtained him a great reputation. Murder was expiated by murder; and the manes of the Duke of Guise, slain so perfidiously were avenged by the shedding of royal blood. Thus perished Clement, *the eternal ornament of France*,† at the age

demanded that the regular ceremonies should be performed.—*Lettres du Cardinal D'Ossat*, part ii. p. 109.

* Mariana.—*De rege et regis institutione*.

† *Sic Clemens perit, aeternum Galliae decus*.

of twenty-four years ; a young man of a simple character, and rather feeble constitution ; but a greater power supported his courage and his strength. “ The Pope’s bull of excommunication which declared the monarch fallen from his throne, and thus exposed him to such an attempt, and the decree of the Sorbonne, which released the French from their oath of allegiance, and declared that such an act would be highly meritorious, may both be attributed to the barbarous manners of the age and the generally enslaved state of the human mind. But the Jesuits who are chiefly men of extensive information, and whose life is professedly contemplative and devout, *still* avoid any declaration which may condemn this murder, and it is wonderful, that the rules of a *religious society* should contain an entire chapter on *regicide*. The doctrines which the fathers of this order taught on that subject, fell into great disrepute, and raised many opponents to the re-establishment of the Jesuits after they had been expelled the kingdom. Still they would not renounce the doctrine ; and Aquaviva their general commanded them *not to affirm* that it was lawful to kill a king ; he also forbade any publication upon regicide, unless it had been examined and approved at Rome ; the crime itself was thus unnoticed, and its discussion only was forbidden.*

But although the death of Henry III. was the cause of unanimous joy in Paris, there was a considerable difference of opinion about his successor. The Duchess of Montpensier persuaded her brother

* Compte des Institutions, &c. Rendu au parlement de Rouen, 1762. p. 118.

Mayenne to take the crown; she urged that he should not lose so fine an opportunity of settling on his family the crown which his ancestors had formerly worn. Villeroy and the president Jeannin, however, were opposed to such a measure, and represented that there were many pretenders to the crown, equally well founded in their claim, and more able to enforce it. Besides which, the Spanish Ambassador, Bernard Mendoza, shewed that the Duke would be opposed by all the influence of his court; it was therefore decided that the Cardinal of Bourbon should be proclaimed as Charles X. which was done without delay.* The Cardinal being old, feeble, and childless, would not interfere with Mayenne's future plans; while the little time which, according to probability, he had to live would afford him a better opportunity for ultimately securing his object. As Charles X. was a captive in the hands of Henry IV. the Duke of Mayenne was invested with the title and authority of Lieutenant-general of the state and crown of France, so that he had the full exercise of the regal authority to ensure the success of his ulterior measures, when the throne should again become vacant.

The parliament of Paris willingly registered the edict which recognised the Cardinal of Bourbon to be King; but in other parts the conflict of interests prevented the adoption of any measure. The parliament of Bordeaux would not acknowledge Henry IV. but was persuaded by Marshal Matignon to

* 7 August, 1589. *Davila*, liv. 10. p. 122—128. *Mem. d'Etat de Villeroy*, vol. i. p. 156—164. *Journal de Henri IV.* *in loc.*

abstain from recognising the right of the Cardinal of Bourbon;* that of Toulouse not only forbade the recognition of Henry of Bourbon, under pain of death, but ordered his excommunication to be republished;† while that of Rouen, declared all those guilty of high treason who opposed the Holy Union.‡

Henry IV. had assembled a parliament at Tours, where his right was acknowledged, and justice administered in his name. The council of the league were indignant at the existence of such a body, and sent a herald with a message informing them that for their cruelty in punishing catholics, they were declared deserters from the true religion, in the war existing between the catholics and the heretics; that they were therefore considered enemies, and that reprisals and confiscations would be proceeded with against them.§

When the King went into Normandy, his army was very small, and he wished to establish himself at Dieppe; as well for the convenience of communication with England, as for the facility of retiring by sea to Rochelle, in the event of a defeat by the league. On his way he prepared for attacking Rouen, and committed some havoc in the neighbourhood.|| The alarm in the town was so great, that Aumale and Brissac, who had retired thither with twelve hundred horsemen, could scarcely restrain the inhabitants from opening the gates. They sent

* Hist. du parlement de Paris, ch. 32. De Thou, liv. 97. vol. ii. p. 21.

† De Thou, liv. 97. vol. ii. p. 22.

‡ Hist. des derniers troubles, vol. ii. p. 14.

§ Mem. de Duplessis Mornay, vol. ii. p. 26.

|| 24 August, 1589.

numerous couriers to the Duke of Mayenne, entreating him to make haste, if he wished to preserve the town.*

Mayenne was nearer than the King expected ; he had left Paris at the end of August with an army of nearly thirty thousand men. Henry having scarcely seven thousand, raised the siege on his approach ; he retired to Dieppe, where he had already placed a small garrison, and wrote to Longueville and D'Aumont, to join him with their forces.

Fortunately for Henry IV. the Duke of Mayenne had lost considerable time in going to a conference with the Duke of Parma ; for if he had attacked the King at once, the triumph of the league would have been secured. Even afterwards he employed himself too long in taking a number of small towns in the neighbourhood in order to deprive the King of all chance of making his escape ; and so confidently did he calculate upon a victory, that he sent information to Spain of the *Bearnois* being shut up in a corner, from whence he could not escape unless he plunged into the sea.† Henry's friends were very much concerned for his personal safety ; and as every one expressed his opinions, and thereby excited alarms, the King decided on taking some resolution which should put an end to their uncertainty.

A council of war was held on the fifth of September ; several persons recommended that detachments should be left in the places they held sufficient to preserve them until the arrival of reinforcements ; and that the King should embark for England or

* Davila, liv. 10. p. 133. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 257.—*Mémoires du Duc d'Angoulême*, p. 35.

† Davila, liv. 10. Perefaxe, liv. 2. *Mem. de Nevers*, vol. ii. p. 93.

Rochelle, a measure which would at once provide for his personal safety, and enable him to negotiate for assistance from abroad. It was Biron's energetic appeal to his honour and character, that preserved him from yielding to that advice; that nobleman convinced him that if he quitted the soil of France it was scarcely possible he could ever return, and that if he placed his hopes on any thing short of the courage and resolution of his followers, he would assuredly lose his crown. Henry then decided on making a stand against the league; but as it might be extremely inconvenient for his cause if he were blockaded in Dieppe, he took his post at the Castle of Arques, about a league distant; and as Mayenne's army had been joined by the forces at Rouen under the Duke of Aumale, no exertions were deemed too great in making trenches, redoubts, and other kinds of defences.*

The Duke of Mayenne arrived on the evening of the fifteenth of September, and took up his quarters at a small village called Martin Eglise,† separated from Arques by the river Bethune. Finding the King's position very strong on that side, he suddenly attacked the suburb of Dieppe, called Polet, the following day. Chatillon was posted there, and made a successful sortie, which threw the assailants into confusion; Marshal Biron then came to his assistance, and completely defeated them, pursuing them into the village of Martin Eglise.‡

Every day produced skirmishes and attacks, but

* *Hist. des derniers troubles*, vol. ii. p. 10. *Cayet*, liv. 1. *Davila*, liv. 10. *Sully*, liv. 3.

† Or Martinglise.

‡ *Davila*, liv. 10. *Mathieu*.—*Hist. des guerres entre les maisons de France et d'Espagne*, p. 23. *Paris*, 1600.

most of them were of no importance. It was believed at the time that there was a division in the councils of the league;* their leaders were so confident of success that they made premature arrangements for the division of the spoil; and the distribution of the various governments and charges created disputes among them, which were with difficulty appeased, and a delay naturally arose in their operations. At length, on the evening of the twentieth, orders were given to pass the river after midnight, and attack before dawn the King's forces posted at a place called La Maladerie, by taking which post there would be a greater probability of attacking Arques with success. Notwithstanding the superiority of their numbers, and the violence of their attack, they were repulsed with great loss, and found themselves immediately attacked on three points by the King in person, by Biron and by Chatillon.†

Finding it impossible to gain the place by force, treachery was used. There were German soldiers in each army, and those in the King's service were employed at that very post. Their countrymen approached the trenches, and, on calling out that they wished to join the King, were assisted in getting into the fort. They were readily believed in their declarations, as a report had been circulated that they wished for an opportunity to abandon the Duke of Mayenne, who did not pay them. No sooner, however, were they in the fort than they attacked the King's troops. Biron advanced to learn the cause of the disorder he observed; he was pulled from his horse and nearly killed. The King also was engaged

* *Perefixe*, liv. 2.

† Mathieu.—*Hist. des guerres, &c.* p. 24.

in the conflict almost alone;* and if Mayenne had been alert at that moment, he would have carried all before him. When Henry found himself struggling in the midst of his enemies he considered his cause lost, but persevered in trying to rally his men, who fled in every direction. At last, in a tone of despair, he exclaimed, “What! are there not, in all France, fifty gentlemen who have resolution enough to die with their King?” Chatillon was then pressing forward to assist him with five hundred musqueteers; he was near enough to hear the King’s appeal, and immediately answered, “Courage, sire! Here we are, ready to die with you.” They immediately attacked the treacherous Lansquenets, and drove them out of the fort. Night coming on, the Duke of Mayenne found he could expect to gain no advantage, and retired with his men into his own lines, the King remaining master of the field of battle.†

Several other attacks were made both on Arques and on Dieppe, but without success. In the meantime the arrival of the Duke of Longueville and Marshal d’Aumont reinforced the royal army, and five thousand men having been sent by Queen Elizabeth, with a supply of ammunition, and a considerable sum of money,‡ Mayenne abandoned his design, and marched his army into Picardy. Nothing could be more complete than his disgrace, for the accounts he had forwarded to Paris were of the most boasting

* A captain of the Lansquenets insolently called out to the King to surrender; and was making a thrust at him with his sword, when La Force and d’Angoulême arrived to his assistance.—*Mem. du Duc d’Angoulême*, p. 69.

† Davila, Mathieu, Cayet, and others.

‡ Sir E. Stafford arrived with this reinforcement the 23rd Sept.—*Mem. du Duc d’Angoulême* p. 75.

kind, and the Lansquenets in their treacherous attack having obtained four or five standards, he sent them to the Duchess of Montpensier. She had a dozen others made, and they were paraded through the city, while a bulletin was distributed, stating that the Duke of Mayenne blockaded the Bearnais by land, and the Duke of Aumale by sea ; that the latter had defeated the English fleet, and that no chance remained of Henry's escape. Couriers brought accounts of his having offered to surrender provided his life were spared, and they announced that he would be brought captive to Paris to grace Mayenne's triumphal entry.*

After such exertions the King's army required repose, and both officers and men were in great want of many things for their private equipments as well as for service, particularly harness which was nearly destroyed by continued rains and violent use. The spoils of the routed army afforded them a good supply, and on the nineteenth of October the King set out for Paris by easy marches. The royal army at this time was increased to twenty thousand infantry, three thousand cavalry, and fourteen heavy guns. This force arrived within a league of Paris on the evening of the thirty-first of October, and was placed in the villages of Issy, Vaugirard, and Montrouge ; the King being resolved to attack the suburbs of Paris the next morning.†

As the people had been deceived by the false boastings of the Sixteen and the Duchess of Montpensier, they were by no means prepared for such an

* Davila, liv. 10. p. 157. Cayet, liv. 1. p. 270. De Thou, liv. 97. Perefixe, liv. 2. et Journal de Henri IV. vol. i. p. 15.

† Cayet, liv. 1. p. 270.

attack ; the defence which was made on the occasion is therefore surprising. But the council of the league being informed of the King's approach, called upon the people to take arms, which every one did, not excepting the clergy ; and they were soon in the same position as when the late king was preparing to attack them three months before. Henry divided his infantry into three bodies ; Biron with one of them attacked the faubourgs St. Victor, and St. Marcel; D'Aumont and Montmorency Thoré, with another division, the faubourgs St. Jacques and St. Michel ; Chatillon and La Noue, that of St. Germain. The cavalry and artillery were divided in the same manner to support each body of infantry. On the signal being given, the faubourgs were simultaneously attacked ; the assailants were aided by a thick fog, and in less than an hour, they were masters of that part of Paris.* If the King's cannon had been brought up in time, the city itself might have been taken ; but a slowness in the movements of those who superintended that service, gave the citizens time to barricade the gates so well, that the idea of forcing them was abandoned for the time. In this attack the Parisians had above nine hundred persons killed, and four hundred were made prisoners. Chatillon, at first committed great havoc among them, being spurred on by a wish to avenge the murder of his father ; but the King gave orders to desist from such proceedings, and in less than two hours the place was as tranquil as if nothing had occurred.† The festival of All Saints was uninterrupted ; and the catholic soldiers of the royal army assisted at mass in the churches.‡ A Pied-

* Cayet, liv. 1. p. 271. † Le Grain, liv. 5. p. 198.

‡ Davila, liv. 10. p. 160.

monteise named St. Severin, was the most remarkable among those who made a vigorous resistance. Supposing the assailants would be occupied with pillage,* he sallied from the city with three hundred men, and threw Chatillon's party into confusion. St. Severin was actively pursuing his success, when he was killed by a musket ball; his death dispirited his followers, and they were almost all killed.†

In the meantime the Duke of Mayenne arrived in Paris; he had heard of the direction taken by the King's army, and changed his course to come up with him. Henry had given orders to destroy the bridge of St. Maixent after his army had passed, in order to arrest Mayenne's progress; that order had not been executed, and the army of the league arrived on the afternoon of the first of November.‡ The King had decided on attacking the city, but that event compelled him to change his plan. In a letter to Duplessis Mornay, he writes, "Since it has pleased God to favour me in this enterprise, I have determined to follow it up, and attack my said city, which I hope to bring back to obedience, unless the army of my enemies, or a part of their forces enter the city within three days." The letter contained the following postscript; "while signing this letter, I am informed that the Duke of Mayenne has just arrived in the city with his army; so that being no longer able to force the city and the army together,

* The royalists certainly made a great booty on this occasion. Sully mentions that he gained 3000 crowns, and Davila observes, that from the plunder, *l'armée recut un merveilleux secours, et en fut fort soulagée.*

† D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 224.

‡ Mem. de Sully, liv. 3. De Thou, liv. 97. Mem. de Tavannes, p. 201.

I am resolved to wait here to-morrow to see what the Duke of Mayenne will try to do, and the day after I will retire in his sight, to see if he will undertake what hitherto he has not dared to do.”*

Henry waited accordingly the following day in expectation of an attack, and on the third he resolved to abandon the faubourgs; still he waited in the sight of the town, drawn up in order of battle, ready to engage Mayenne if he would come out. The league would not accept the challenge, and the King set out for Tours, where he had promised to hold a meeting of the states-general.†

Among those who were made prisoners in the attack on the suburbs, was Burgoing, prior of the Dominicans; he was actively engaged in the defence with other monks, who like him had taken the sword and cuirass. He was sent to Tours, where sometime afterwards he was condemned to the punishment of regicides.‡ He suffered death with constancy, and declared, when exhorted to confess his crime, “he had done all that he could, but not all that he would have done.”§ His portrait was placed among the Dominican martyrs, in a church at Valladolid belonging to that order.|| A wealthy citizen of Paris, named Charpentier, a member of the council of the league, also fell into the King’s hands. His friends in the city immediately arrested, among others, a person named Blanchet, a suspected royalist, and

* Mem, de Duplessis Mornay, vol. ii. p. 39. The date of this letter has unaccountably been changed to the 11th, and it is placed accordingly.

† Davila, liv. 10. p. 161.

‡ Journal de Henri IV. vol. i. p. 18. According to De Thou, liv. 98. he was executed in February, 1590.

§ Cayet, liv. 1. p. 228.

|| Journal de Henri III.

declared that his life should answer for Charpentier's safety. An exchange had been arranged; Charpentier had paid a sum agreed for his ransom, and was preparing to return to Paris. At the moment he was leaving, Biron heard that Blanchet had been put to death to gratify the populace;* the marshal instantly went to the King, and insisted on avenging such a crime, for otherwise he would be deserted by his followers. Charpentier in consequence was ordered to be hanged.†

The president Potier de Blancmesnil was likewise in great danger, for he was suspected of having sent a communication to the King, that when he arrived before Paris, the royalists would co-operate from within. The Sixteen immediately put him on his trial, and were unanimous in sentencing him to death. The Duke of Mayenne arrived at the important moment; and having a great respect for that magistrate, he released him from his dreadful position at the request of De Gevre the president's brother, and afterwards allowed him to quit Paris and join the King.‡

* 20 Nov. 1589. According to the *Journal de Henri IV.*

† Cayet, liv. 1. p. 273. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 225.

‡ *Journal de Henri IV.* Le Grain, liv. 5. Whether this event took place immediately, or some months afterwards, is of no great importance; and it is probably the admitted correctness of the fact itself, which has caused it to remain undiscussed. The *Journal de Henri IV.* states, that he was arrested on the 3rd November; but Villeroy in his *Mem. d'Etat*, (vol. i. p. 184.) mentions the arrest of the president, as a circumstance that prevented his leaving Paris, after the arrival of the legate Cujetan, at the end of January, 1590.

tachment at Pacy;* he distinctly saw two armies in the air, but was unable to pronounce whether it was an illusion or a reality: “ Yet says he, this object made such an impression on my mind, that I was not at all surprised on reading a letter which I received from the King the next day. He informed me that the Duke of Mayenne’s army, joined by the Spaniards, had approached him with a view to giving battle.” The letter finished with these words; “ I conjure you, therefore, to come and bring with you all that you can, especially your company, and the two companies of armed horsemen that I left with you, for I know them, and wish to make use of them.”†

When the King relinquished the siege of Dreux, he held a consultation with his superior officers; gave them a full explanation of the plan he proposed to adopt, and appointed a general rendezvous at the village of St. Andrew, on the plain of Ivry.‡ Henry took up his head quarters at Nonancourt, and his generals lodged with their divisions in the surrounding places; he had so fully expected to be attacked, that on the ninth of March he had written to Mornay to hasten his arrival with all the force he could collect.

At that time Mornay was at Chateaudun, and by great exertion he arrived within two leagues of Nonancourt, on the evening of the twelfth.§ Besides this reinforcement, Mouy and Tremouille arrived with two hundred horsemen from Poictou, Humieres brought two hundred gentlemen from Pi-

* *Pacy-sur-Euse*, distant four leagues from Ivry.

† *Mem. de Sully*, liv. 3.

‡ *Mathieu.—Hist. des guerres, &c.* p. 27.

§ *Mem. de Duplessis Mornay*, vol. ii. p. 56.

cardy, and Sully with his men arrived about two hours before the battle commenced.*

Both armies passed the thirteenth of March in order of battle on the plain of Ivry, but nothing occurred. Mornay relates that there were some skirmishes, and a few blows were exchanged, but the day passed off without an engagement. Not without wonder, as there was neither brook nor hill nor barrier between them."† The rain meantime fell incessantly, and very much inconvenienced the army of the league, who were not so well quartered as the royalists. The whole night, says Davila, passed in a continued labour and uneasiness on both sides ; large fires were kindled in both camps ; sentinels were placed in every direction, and were changed by the *maitres-de-camp* every half hour. The King's army, however, having a good supply of provisions, and being better lodged, was enabled to take both refreshment and repose ; a thing almost impracticable in the camp of their enemies. Mayenne was not at all desirous of giving battle ; he thought that by keeping the King in the field, he would exhaust his resources and fatigue his followers. But Count Egmont protested against the Spanish troops being so uselessly employed ; for as the catholic King had stripped the Low Countries of their proper forces, he desired ardently that a great effort should be made to bring the war to a conclusion. Mayenne being well informed of the prevailing opinion at Paris, could not resist Egmont's wish, especially as it was backed by the representative of the legate who was

* Davila, liv. 11. Sully, liv. 3.

† Mem. de Duplessis Mornay, vol. ii. p. 56.

with the army. He resolved therefore to attack the King on the following morning.*

The force of the two armies was very unequal; the King had eight thousand infantry and rather more than two thousand cavalry. Mayenne had twelve thousand infantry and four thousand horsemen. They were drawn out ready for action between nine and ten in the morning, and both parties appeared very desirous of engaging.† On the preceding day both catholics and protestants in the King's army had made their public devotions, and the churches of Nonancourt were full of the nobles and gentlemen who went to mass, while the Huguenot ministers performed divine service with their followers.‡ When every arrangement was made, and the army was ready to charge, the King advanced in front of his men in complete armour, but bare headed, and made aloud a prayer to the Almighty for his favour and protection. When he had finished a general shout of *Vive le Roi* was heard, and the King then addressed his followers, exhorting them to keep their ranks, and assured them that he was determined to conquer or die with them. “If the standard fail you,” said he, “keep my plume in your eye; you will always see it in the path of honour and duty.”§ So saying he put on his helmet, which was adorned with three fine white plumes; at the same time perceiving that the wind blew direct in the faces of the soldiers, and that in consequence the smoke would inconvenience them, he gave orders for taking a position more to the left: Mayenne per-

* Davila, liv. 11. p. 227.

† Mathieu.—*Hist. des guerres, &c.* p. 29.

‡ *Hist. des derniers troubles*, vol. ii. p. 16.

§ D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 231.

ceived the King's troops in motion and sounded for a general charge.*

Mayenne on his side had not neglected to awaken the feelings of religion in the bosoms of his soldiers ; he went before his army, preceded by a monk bearing a crucifix, to remind them that they were about to fight in behalf of religion, against heretics and their encouragers, the declared enemies of Jesus Christ and his church.†

The battle commenced with a furious discharge of artillery ; but when the contending parties came to close quarters, the conflict was principally between the cavalry of each army. The King had divided his into several small divisions, as the only remedy for the inferiority of his numbers ; and this measure preserved him from defeat ; for the advantage which was gained by the enemy in one part, was balanced by the result of other divisions, and a small body being more immediately under the eye of the commander was rallied with less difficulty. For a long time the result of the battle was uncertain. Marshal d'Aumont made a successful charge, but the other divisions were broken. Mornay, in describing the battle, says, "the enemy had the advantage so generally that France was on the point of ruin."‡

The grand struggle however was with the division commanded by the King in person ; it consisted of six hundred horsemen. The main body of the enemy's cavalry was opposed to it ; Count Egmont, the Duke of Nemours, and the Chevalier d'Aumale commanded ; they had twelve hundred lancers, flanked by four

* Davila, liv. 11. p. 229. Perefixe, liv. 2. Cayet, liv. 2.

† Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, vol. ii. p. 268.

‡ Mem. de Duplessis Mornay, vol. ii. p. 57.

hundred dragoons.* The King charged upon his opponents; for a quarter of an hour he could not be recognised, and a report prevailed through the ranks that he was killed. But soon after he re-appeared covered with blood and dust, and the shouts of joy which were given by the royalists, served to dishearten their enemies, whose rout then became general. The French and Swiss troops surrendered; but the Germans were nearly annihilated; and the Duke of Mayenne escaped by destroying the bridge after he had crossed the Eure.† The battle was not entirely finished till the evening, for the King's troops continued to pursue and harass their enemies all the remainder of the day, chiefly with a view to prevent their re-assembling. The leaguers lost all their baggage and artillery, and almost the whole of their army; for besides the numbers that were killed, there were so many that surrendered after the battle, that scarcely four thousand made their escape. Count Egmont, the Spanish general, was among the slain.‡

Biron was not in the battle; he remained with a body of reserve, and assisted only in the pursuit. When he saw how the King had been exposed in the fight, he said to him, "Ah! sire, this is not right; you have done to day what Biron should have done, while he has done what the King should do." Indeed the King's friends were so concerned at the danger to which he had exposed himself, that they intreated him to be more careful of his person, and to consider that his destiny was to be King of France, and not a dragoon; that his subjects were all ready

* *Arquebusiers à cheval.*

† This is Cayet's account: but Duplessis Mornay states, that he swam across the river in disguise.—*Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 58.

‡ Davila, Mathieu, Duplessis Mornay, and others.

to fight for him, but that they were all lost if they had no head to direct them.*

Sully has given us a description of what occurred to him in this memorable battle. He was in the King's squadron, and had to sustain a most furious attack from Count Egmont. He observed that the Reitres being of the same religion, did not do them so much injury as they could have done, and often fired in the air; but Egmont and the Spaniards fought so desperately, that the advantage was decidedly in their favour for a long time. Sully's horse was disabled, and a second horse was killed under him; he was at the same time wounded by a pistol ball, and lay senseless on the field. When he recovered a little, the armies were not to be seen; and as he thought the King's army had been defeated, he prepared his mind for the worst. He succeeded in obtaining a horse, upon which he mounted, and soon after observed seven persons approaching him; he saw that one of them carried Mayenne's standard, and expected to be taken prisoner or killed by them. His surprise was great when he found they surrendered themselves as his prisoners. This was the first intimation he received of the King's success; he went to Rosny as soon as he possibly could, and was there received by Henry IV. with marks of great friendship and esteem.†

The King remained a fortnight at Mantes; and while his soldiers were reposing after their victory at Ivry, he received the news of another battle gained by his forces at Issoire in Auvergne.‡ His affairs

* Perefixe, liv. 2. Cayet, liv. 2.

† Mem. de Sully, liv. 3.

‡ Cayet, liv. 2. Sully, liv. 4. Le Grain, liv. 5.

prospered in every direction, and it was unfortunate that he did not follow the advice of La Noue, who recommended him to march at once upon the capital, and crush the league, before time was given for their leaders to make fresh arrangements. But the King was dissuaded from marching to Paris, for which different reasons have been assigned. Some have thought that Marshal Biron was not at all desirous of putting a period to his importance, by finishing the war; while others attribute it to the Huguenots, who feared the King might be persuaded to change his religion, if the Parisians received him on his arrival. It was decided in council, that the town should be blockaded; and if that method proved successful, the King was recommended to suppress the rentes of the Hotel-de-Ville, and by that means deliver the state from the payment of the late King's debts which were very considerable.*

The news of the victory was brought to Paris the following day, by the Sieur du Tremblay, a prisoner released on his parole, who of course had not been in the battle, but being in the neighbourhood was able to proceed to the capital with the intelligence. He mentioned it to the Archbishop of Lyons, who in turn communicated the same to the legate, and the Spanish ambassador.† They feared lest the news should cause an insurrection in the city; and to prevent any such consequences, they resolved that the preachers should be employed to make it known from the pulpits in a careful manner. The Duchess of Montpensier had been accustomed to amuse the Parisians with false accounts; among

* Perefixe, liv. 2.

† Davila, liv. 11. p. 242. Villeroy, vol. i. p. 186.

others she had given out that at the first attack upon Dreux, the King had been repulsed with the loss of five hundred men, besides a great many wounded, and that Marshal Biron was not expected to live. There was also published an account of a battle having been fought at Poissy, in which the Holy Union had gained a great victory, and that if the Bearnais was not dead, he was but little better.* The real account being therefore so very opposite, the preachers used great management in announcing the unwelcome tidings. Among them, one of the most remarkable was Christin de Nisse, who preaching on the sixteenth of March, took for his text, "whom the Lord loveth he rebukes and chastens;" and in his sermon he shewed a number of instances in which the people of God had been afflicted and tried. Then holding forth a letter which appeared to have that moment arrived, he expressed the regret he felt that he had been that day a prophet rather than a preacher, since it had pleased God to inform the Parisians by his mouth of the affliction which was to befall them. He concluded by telling them, that after fighting two days, the catholic army had lost the battle, and exhorted them anew to defend their religion and their country. Other preachers exerted themselves to prevent the public from despairing, and with great success.†

The Duke of Mayenne would not enter Paris, but remained at St. Denis, where he was visited by the legate, the Spanish ambassador, the Archbishop of Lyons, Villeroy, and many persons of note: his sister, the Duchess of Montpensier, also went to console him

* Hist. des derniers troubles, vol. ii. p. 19.

† Davila, liv. 11. p. 224.

in his trouble, and consult upon the best means of remedying his loss."* La Morée was immediately sent off to the Duke of Parma, urging him to come to the assistance of the Union; and Mayenne himself set out for Soissons a day or two afterwards to join them on their arrival. The defence of Paris was meanwhile intrusted to the Duke of Nemours, and pressing letters were written to the Pope and to the King of Spain. The Parisians on their side made great exertions to strengthen the fortifications of the city and to lay up as great a store of both ammunition and provision, as could be done in their already blockaded state.†

When the legate was informed that the King's army had quitted Mantes, and that the blockade of Paris was fully resolved on, he made an effort to gain time, in order that the Duke of Parma might come to the assistance of the Union. Villeroy had conferred with Duplessis Mornay very soon after the battle of Ivry, but the object of his proposals was seen through, and nothing done.‡ But when the legate himself appeared to wish for an arrangement, the King consented to a conference, which was held at Noisy; Biron, Givry, and Reyol attended on behalf of the King; the legate was accompanied by Gondy, some Italian bishops, Villeroy and Belin. The conference proved absolutely useless; and the King continued his old plan of shutting up every avenue to Paris.§ He took Melun on the 5th of April; and while there, he received a fresh proposal from Villeroy, who

* Mem. de Villeroy, vol. i. p. 187. Cayet, liv. 2. p. 344.

† Davila, liv. 11. p. 248.

‡ Mem. de Villeroy, vol. i. pp. 190 et seq.

§ Cayet liv. 2. p. 345. De Thou, liv. 98. Villeroy, vol. i. p. 201.

dwell at length upon the necessity of the King's being instructed in the catholic faith, as indispensably necessary for healing the divisions of the country, and observed, that as such affairs could not be discussed during the confusion of war, a truce ought to be concluded, to allow the subject to be well deliberated and examined. Henry had paid great attention to Villeroy's remarks upon the miseries caused by a conflict of religious opinions ; but directly the word *truce* was mentioned, he gave the speaker to understand that he would not throw away the advantage of his late victory, by delaying the execution of his projects. Villeroy then returned to Paris, and the royalists continued to take the different towns in the surrounding parts.*

Paris was invested in the beginning of May ;† the King's force was not sufficient to storm the city, but he expected that the miseries of a blockade would make the inhabitants return to their duty, and acknowledge him for their King. On the other hand, the league being satisfied with their means of defence, took every precaution for preventing any thing like mutiny from shewing itself. The Duke of Nemours had caused a number of cannon to be cast, and the fortifications were strengthened in every direction ; while the Bastille, and other posts of importance, were confided to none but those who were too far compromised in the rebellion to hope for pardon if the King should be successful. The greatest care was taken to husband the stores which were in the

* Mem. de Villeroy, vol. i. p. 203—218. Davila, liv. 11. p. 255—270.

† According to the *Journal de Henri IV.* the bridge of Charenton was taken on the 7th, and the Porte St. Martin attacked the 12th of May.

city; and the slightest suspicion of being a royalist, exposed a person to the certain loss of his property, and frequently to be hanged. These precautions enabled the chiefs of the league to maintain their authority in the midst of such distress. It is, however, very doubtful that even then they would have succeeded, if the preachers, Boucher, Pelletier, Lincestre, and others, had not preserved the spirit of enthusiasm by their exhortations, in calling on the faithful to die, rather than submit to a prince who was a heretic.* The money of the Spanish ambassador, the influence of the princesses and ladies of the league, and the decree of the Sorbonne,† declaring that whoever died in defence of the city, would enjoy the martyr's crown, all combined to create a spirit of resistance which has rendered this siege unequalled in modern times.

By the beginning of June the provisions, although distributed sparingly, were nearly exhausted; and the clergy called upon the inhabitants to take a-new the oath prescribed by the Sorbonne. A general assembly was held at the Hotel-de-Ville, when all swore that they would die a thousand deaths, rather than consent to receive a heretic king. At the same time to give more effect, a grand procession was ordered, on which occasion the oath was renewed at the church of Notre Dame.‡ In this procession, were seen all the ecclesiastics in Paris; William Rose, Bishop of Senlis, marched at their head, with a crucifix in one hand, and a halbert in the other. After

* *Journal de Henri IV.* vol. i. p. 42. *Hist. des derniers troubles*, vol. ii. p. 22.

† Dated 7th of May, 1590.

‡ *Maimbourg.—Hist. de la Ligue*, liv. 4.

him came the Prior of the Carthusians, followed by all his monks, with their habits tucked up and their cowls thrown back to make room for helmets. The mendicant orders, and the Capucins followed in the same style, all armed with such weapons as they could procure. Hamilton, curate of St. Cosme, acted as serjeant-major ; he regulated their halts, and gave orders for firing. The legate could not be absent ; and as the procession passed before him, each division fired a salute ; one of the pieces proved to be loaded with ball, and the legate's chaplain was killed by his side. This circumstance appeared likely to trouble the public feeling, but the clergy declared that as the deceased was killed in so good a cause, his soul had certainly flown to heaven ; and as the legate gave his opinion to that effect, no one could presume to doubt it. The march of the procession was continued amidst volleys of musketry, and singing of hymns and psalms.*

Famine meanwhile began to assume a dreadful aspect ; the example as well as the preaching of the monks preserved the people from despondency for a considerable time ; they were every day amused with pretended letters from the Dukes of Mayenne and Parme, who were coming to raise the siege ; and seeing the ecclesiastics join in the public labours as well as the defence of the city, they could not repine at their sufferings. But as the calls of hunger became more pressing, many demanded peace ; and after hanging the most vehement among them, the rest were invited to suffer for the cause of religion. The people were gratified with processions instead of food, and as a consolation for the dying citizens the

* Cayet, vol. 1. p. 361. Journal de Henri IV. vol. i. p. 51.

legate distributed a number of indulgences *in articulo mortis*. The ecclesiastics, and especially the monks, were well provided with provisions, and could therefore preach patience and resignation to a starving population.* It was ordered that all the store houses should be visited. Tyrius, the rector of the Jesuits, demanded of the legate an exception for his house. The provost of the trades, who was present, contended that the proposal was neither Christian nor neighbourly; and commenced his search with their college. They had a year's supply of corn, biscuit, and salted meat, and being under no apprehension of wanting food, they were the most zealous of all the clergy in impressing on the minds of the people how much more glorious it was to die of hunger than to acknowledge *the Bearnais for their King*. “At the Capucins,” says Pierre de l'Estoile,† “was found biscuit in abundance; in short, in all the dwellings of the clergy were found provisions more than was necessary for half-a-year.” The stores of the different monasteries and colleges afforded relief to the starving Parisians, but only a momentary one; horses, asses, dogs, cats, and even rats were eaten.‡ The Duchess of Montpensier was offered golden chains and rings to the value of two thousand crowns for her dog; which she refused, saying, “she should reserve it for herself when her own stores were consumed;” one of her women actually died of hunger.||

The Parisians had a great repugnance to eating

* De Thou, Mathieu, D'Aubigné, Mezeray, et Felibien.—*Hist. de la Ville de Paris*.

† Journal de Henri IV. vol. i. p. 58.

‡ Discours véritable et notable du siége de la Ville de Paris, p. 27. This piece, which is attributed to Pierre Correio, is inserted in the 4th vol. of *Memoires d'Etat de Villeroy*.

|| Journal de Henri IV. vol. i. p. 67, 68.

human flesh, although that was done in some cases ; but they ground the bones of their deceased fellow-citizens, and mixed it with bran and chaff ; of which, at the legate's suggestion they made a kind of bread.* Fresh ordinances appeared, forbidding the least allusion to any composition with Henry of Bourbon, under pain of death ; but hunger compelled the people to complain, and the pulpit was again found to be the most efficacious means of quieting their clamours ; preachers held up the host and the crucifix exclaiming, “ Learn to die in the cause of a God who died to save you.”†

In the meantime the King's army was greatly augmented ; the prospect of taking Paris had brought him numerous companies to join his standard ; and the hopes of plunder made many of his officers persuade him to attack the city. But Henry IV. considered that Paris was the most valuable jewel of his crown ; and that it was not the interest of a king to suffer so many innocent persons to be included in the punishment of the rebels, who prevented him from being properly received as a sovereign. He persisted in the blockade, and would certainly have reduced the city had not many of his commanders betrayed their trust in permitting provisions to pass for large sums of money. The soldiers then imitated their officers, and the besieging army drained Paris of great part of its wealth, by obtaining a high price for the provisions they sold across the walls. A practice which the King was obliged to suffer, as he had not the means of paying his troops.‡

* De Thou, liv. 99. vol. ii. p. 177. Davila, liv. 11. p. 295.

† Hist. de la Sorbonne, vol. ii. p. 45. Hist. des derniers troubles, vol. ii. p. 21.

‡ Perefixe, liv. 2.

As the horrors of the famine increased, a deputation was sent to the King for his permission for a number of aged and feeble persons to leave the city. Many of his council advised him to refuse the request, as the only way to subdue the town by driving the people to revolt against the league in desperation ; but the King thought otherwise. “ I am not surprised,” said he, “ that the chiefs of the league, and the Spaniards have so little compassion on those poor people ; they are only their tyrants ; but I, who am their father and their King, cannot listen to the recital of their calamities without being touched to the bottom of my soul, and endeavouring to remedy them. I cannot prevent those who are possessed by the spirit of the league from perishing with it, but as to those who implore my clemency, they cannot help the crimes of others ; I will hold out my arms to them.” When the permission was announced above four thousand persons left the town, and cried out with all the strength which their wretched condition would allow, *Vive le Roi*. From that time the King’s soldiers prevented no one from making their escape.*

But the obstinacy of the league was unparalleled, and as a means of forcing a capitulation, an attack was ordered on all the faubourgs, on the night of the twenty-fourth of July. The captains chosen to conduct the enterprise acquitted themselves very well, and they were all taken in less than an hour.† Fresh instances were made to induce the King to

* Perefixe, liv. 2. et Journal de Henri IV. *in loc.* Discours véritable, et notable du siège de la Ville de Paris, p. 32.

† Davila, liv. 11. p. 296. De Thou, liv. 99. Discours véritable, &c. p. 27. Mem de Sully, liv. 4. p. 14. Edit. 1778.

attack the town, in which case he would have certainly taken it, but he would not think of such an alternative while he could temporise. He wrote a letter to the Duke of Nemours in which he highly complimented him on his defence of the town, but recommended him not to expose the capital to be plundered through too much obstinacy; for even if they expected assistance should arrive, a battle would be the consequence, and unless Mayenne had better fortune than in the last engagement, no relief could arrive to the besieged. Nemours would not send any reply to the King, but in a letter to one of his marshals he requested him to tell the King of Navarre that his false religion was the only obstacle, but that on his embracing the true faith, he would be the foremost in advancing his cause.

Still, in spite of the Duke of Nemours, Cardinal Gondy succeeded in engaging the King to a conference at the Abbey of St. Antoine, for discussing the proposals of peace. Had the King then announced his intention of doing what he was afterwards compelled to consent to, the city would have surrendered to him. Henry, however, considered the town could not long hold out and not supposing the Duke of Parma contemplated rendering the league the assistance upon which they calculated, he offered them terms which were favourable considering their situation, but which without being vigorous, made them appear indebted to his clemency and forgiveness; the conferences therefore produced no result.*

Meanwhile the Duke of Parma was informed of the extremity of the Parisians. It was on the fifth of

* Davila, liv. 11. p. 300—306. Cayet, liv. 2. p. 372. Mem. de Nevers, vol. ii. p. 607.

August that the King conferred with Gondy, and on the sixth, the Duke had quitted Valenciennes with twelve thousand infantry, three thousand horsemen, a great store of ammunition, and fifteen hundred carriages laden with provisions for the supply of Paris: he arrived at Meaux on the twenty-second. Alexandre Farnese, Duke of Parma, was at this time one of the first captains of the age; he was averse to quitting his own government, to risk his reputation against a prince who had been so successful in the field. He also feared that some ill consequence might arise from his depriving the Netherlands of the principal part of the Spanish force. But Philip's orders were positive, and he set out for the relief of Paris.*

The arrival of the Spanish forces compelled the King to raise the siege, to his great mortification. The different captains by the expression of their regret, seemed to reprove him for not taking what had been at his command for some time. The only thing that could be done was to leave three thousand men in the faubourgs, while the King conducted the rest of his army to Chelles, a town on the Marne about six leagues from Paris; the Dukes of Parma and Mayenne being at Claye, on the road from Meaux to the capital.

The two armies were in presence on the first of September, the Duke of Parma riding out to reconnoitre, is said to have taunted Mayenne with the account he had sent of the King having only ten thousand men, who were in a poor condition, whereas there were twenty-five thousand men in excellent order and well equipped.† The in-

* Davila, liv. II. p. 309—15. Cayet, liv. 2. Perefixe, liv. 2.

† Hist. des derniers troubles, vol. ii. p. 23.

equality of their forces made the Spanish general resolve to avoid an action; he fortified his position, and succeeded in taking Lagny, which the King could not assist in time on account of some marshes lying between him and the town. The Duke was then able to send relief to Paris, and thus concluded the siege which had lasted above four months, and during which more than thirteen thousand persons had died of famine.*

After waiting some days, it appeared impossible to bring the Duke of Parma to an engagement, and the King marched off his army; but being vexed at the siege being raised, and finding the disappointment very general in his army, he resolved to try an attack by escalade the following night. It was the ninth of September; between three and four thousand choice soldiers were sent into the faubourgs St. Jacques and St. Marcel in the evening, ready to attack that part of the town after midnight. The arrival of those soldiers had created an alarm, and the tocsin had been rung; but as the royalists remained quiet in the suburbs, the people went home satisfied that it was a false alarm. Ten Jesuits, however, resolved to remain on the watch in that quarter, and when the assailants placed their ladders early in the morning, they would certainly have succeeded but for the vigilance of the reverend fathers. There was a thick fog, and the royalists had advanced to the wall, when a Jesuit who was then performing the part of a sentinel, called out *to arms! to arms!* The soldiers, however, continued to mount, and the foremost were killed by these warlike ecclesiastics. Some lighted straw was then thrown into the moat,

* Cayet, Sully, D'Aubigné, Mathieu et Davila.

and the enterprise was completely foiled.* After this the King withdrew to Senlis, and soon after the royal army separated; the King retained about his person a flying camp, placed divisions in the towns around Paris, and sent the rest to their homes.

CHAP. XLVI.

DEATH OF THE CARDINAL OF BOURBON AND SIXTUS V.;—

ATTACK ON ST. DENIS;—SIEGE OF CHARTRES;—
EDICT OF NANTES;—PRESIDENT JEANNIN SENT TO
SPAIN;—CONSPIRACY OF THE YOUNG CARDINAL OF
BOURBON;—SIEGE OF NOYON.

THE state of public affairs was considerably changed by the death of two individuals during the late siege. The Cardinal of Bourbon expired in prison on the ninth of May;† his death was of consequence only by its reviving, with more earnestness, the question of the succession. This served the cause of Henry IV. by creating a conflict of interests, and by stirring up a strong feeling of jealousy against the Spaniards; they had assumed great importance during the siege, and still more after the arrival of the Duke of Parma, who had increased the number of Spanish troops in the garrison.

* Cayet, liv. 2. p. 381. Davila, liv. 11. p. 330—332, et *discours véritable*, &c. p. 83.

† It was announced in Paris without the least mark of honour or respect. Cayet, liv. 2. p. 360.

The Pope, Sixtus V., died on the twenty-seventh of August. This event caused extreme joy to the league; it was known in Paris on the fifth of September; and when Aubry, curate of St. André-des-Arts, announced it in his sermon, he observed—"God has delivered us from a wicked Pope; if he had lived much longer we should have been surprised to find the Pope preached against in Paris; but it must have been done."* Sixtus was indignant at the prostitution of the catholic religion by the leaguers, and had refused them any further help: he had been favourable to the cause at his elevation to the pontificate, but being better informed as to their chief object, he regretted having given them encouragement. His opinions towards both Queen Elizabeth and Henry IV. are well known, for he was able to appreciate merit although he could not openly declare his sentiments. The Spanish faction, however, perceived the dangerous tendency of such policy, and Philip II. sent the Count d'Olivarez to Rome, to summon the Pope to fulfil his promises to the league. Sixtus took offence at such a measure, and refused to see Olivarez a second time; neither would he acknowledge him as an ambassador. From that time a number of pamphlets appeared, which attacked the Pope's character, and treated him as a heretic.†

It is not therefore surprising that his death should be attributed to poison: such was the opinion current at Rome; and when the King of France received the intelligence, he is said to have exclaimed; "that is a piece of Spanish policy;" after a pause he added, "I lose a Pope who was my friend, God grant that

* Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, liv. 4.

† G. Leti, *Vita di Sisto V.* lib. 10.

his successor may be like him.* The Cardinal Castagno was elected, and took the title of Urban VII; but he died thirteen days after, and a long and stormy conclave followed: the college at last decided on choosing Hercules Sfrondato, a man devoted to the court of Spain, and who was styled Gregory XIV. He displayed much zeal for the league, and subsequently devoted to that cause the large sums of money which Sixtus had amassed for carrying on a war against the Turks, for the recovery of the Holy Land for the relief of the poor of Rome in times of scarcity, and other purposes which he directed to be maturely deliberated.

Still the affairs of the league were by no means prosperous. Many of the Parisians complained that the Spaniards under pretence of assisting them, had seized upon the city, as well as some towns in the environs. This jealousy and ill-will made the Duke of Parma decide on leaving the city, a measure to which he was also moved by the necessity of his presence in Flanders. The chiefs of the league were alarmed at being again deserted, and in order to detain the Duke, they announced a treaty being in hand between the King and Mayenne, which they said would inevitably be concluded to the ruin of the Union if he abandoned them. The Duke of Parma was not to be deceived by their artifice, and after staying a few days to rest his army, he set out for the Netherlands, taking the rout of Champagne as the least probable to offer any difficulty in his march.†

The King in the meantime had continued to intercept the supplies destined for Paris; and with his flying camp had unceasingly harassed the league.

* Ibid. .

† Davila, liv. 11. p. 340—344.

The Duke of Parma, before his departure, endeavoured to relieve the city from this state of blockade, by seizing some of the places held by the King's troops. He succeeded in taking St. Maur and Charenton, and after a desperate resistance he gained possession of Corbeil.* The latter town was soon retaken by escalade, and when the King's troops were informed of the cruelties which the Spaniards had inflicted on the inhabitants, they were so enraged that they put every one of them to the sword.†

The Spanish army left Paris in the beginning of November. Parma's return was very different from his march into France, for the King and Marshal Biron hovered about him with a body of cavalry, and some choice infantry, and compelled his men to keep constantly in close order, a circumstance which rendered his halts inconvenient by the difficulty of procuring supplies. The royalists attacked his rear at Marle, where there was a sharp engagement, in which the Spaniards lost part of their baggage.‡ A second encounter took place four days after as they were crossing the Aisne, with a similar result. This was the last affair which occurred between the parties, for Parma hearing that the Count de Nassau was in Flanders, at the head of an army raised by the assistance of the Queen of England, he made all the haste he could in his retreat. Henry IV. went no further than St. Quentin, where he made a short

* Mathieu, *Hist. des guerres, &c.* Davila, liv. 11. p. 338—40.
The siege of Corbeil lasted from 22nd Sept. to 16th Oct.

† 10th Nov. 1590. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 242. Cayet, liv. 2. p. 386.

‡ 25th Nov. 1590. Marle is a small town in Picardy, (Dept. de l'Aisne,) about 30 leagues N. E. of Paris.

stay. The arrival of the Spanish force had retarded his operations, but had not frustrated his plans ; and when the Duke of Parma quitted France, the league was nearly in the same condition as before.*

On the third of January, 1591, the Chevalier d'Aumale made an attempt to seize St. Denis. He left Paris in the night with a thousand infantry and two hundred horsemen, and succeeded in approaching the place without being discovered. The water in the moat being hard frozen, the ladders were placed with ease ; and two officers, followed by twenty-four men, scaled the wall, and succeeded in breaking open one of the gates from within. Aumale, who was on foot, entered the town at the head of his men. De Vicq, the governor, was aroused by the noise, and considering the town irrecoverably lost, he became desperate ; he imagined that the carelessness of his soldiers had destroyed all the renown he had acquired in a long military career. He mounted his horse, and followed by only thirty persons, he ordered a charge to be sounded by two trumpeters, and galloped upon Aumale's men. The darkness of the night, and the noise of the trumpets, made the leaguers believe that he was more numerously attended, and they were soon thrown into confusion ; their leader was killed, and the assailants being unable to rally, were driven out of the town with the loss of more than a hundred of their companions.†

The King on his side would not remain inactive ; he planned an attack on Paris, which was to be pre-

* Davila, liv. 11. Mathieu.—*Hist. de guerres, &c.* Le Grain, liv. 5.

† Davila, liv. 12. p. 381. *Hist. des derniers troubles*, vol. ii. p. 26. Ceyet, liv. 3. p. 403. *Journal de Henri IV.* vol. 1. p. 117.

ceded by the entry of about fourscore determined men, disguised as countrymen, each of whom had a sack of flour on his horse. The night of the twentieth of January was fixed on for the execution of his attempt; but the chiefs of the league having some secret information, they took measures for preventing a surprise.* Henry's disappointment was increased, when he found that his projected attempt had served as a pretext for the introduction of four thousand Spaniards, a measure which the circumstance appeared to justify, and which the moderate party could not oppose, although they were satisfied that the dominion of the royalists would be less injurious than that of foreigners.

The next enterprise formed by the King was the siege of Chartres. That place was obstinately defended for more than two months.† An honourable composition was granted; and when the King entered the town he was harangued by the magistrates upon the obedience they owed him, according to the laws both human and divine. "And you may add the *canon law*," said the King, who spurred his horse and rode on.‡

Directly the military operations slackened, the contest between the Huguenots and the catholic royalists was rekindled. There were many among the protestants who could not place any dependance in a promise of toleration, unless it were secured by the King himself professing their religion: they were therefore averse to the renewal of the proposal for the King to be instructed. Duplessis Mornay was

* Davila, liv. 12. Cayet, liv. 3. Journal de Henri IV. p. 119.

† From 10th February to 19th April, 1591. Davila, liv. 12. p. 397—404. Cayet, liv. 3. p. 416. Le Grain, liv. 5. p. 234.

‡ Mathieu, vol. ii. liv. 1. p. 66.

unquestionably the most important among the Huguenots for learning and experience, but he does not appear to have felt so much alarm. His grand object was to have a general council, which meeting, upon unbiassed delegations, should allow the greatest liberty in discussion. While the war lasted such an assembly was impracticable; he therefore drew up an edict, which he submitted to the King in November, 1590;* and in the month of March following he again addressed his majesty respecting the proposed declaration. As some influence had been used to prevent the King from signing the edict, he explained and justified it in his letter. "This declaration," says he, "consisted principally of three articles; the first was the revocation of the edict of July; the second, the re-establishment of the edict of pacification, made in 1577; the third, the restoration of the Roman catholic worship in all places held by the King at the time of the truce, permitting, however, the exercise of the reformed religion in the same. All three articles to remain in force until his majesty, by the grace of God, shall be able to unite all his subjects in one faith and religion. To effect that, a general or national council should be announced, or an ecclesiastical convocation freely and legally assembled in the kingdom, consisting of the most holy and learned persons of Christianity, and to which his majesty could submit his opinions."† It is evident, therefore, that Duplessis Mornay was by no means intolerant; he was willing to allow the catholics the same liberty that he desired himself;

* *Formulaire de la declaration pour la revocation de l'édit de Juillet.—Mem. de Duplessis*, vol. ii. p. 66.

† *Mem. de Duplessis*, vol. ii. p. 81.

but in all that concerned the papacy he was inflexible. Soon after the siege of Chartres he addressed a memorial to the King, containing advice as to the form he should use in writing to the Pope, and calling upon him to be cautious in making use of the terms *holy father, vicar of Christ, &c.*; for, said he, the words might be represented very different from their intended meaning, and cause considerable trouble.*

The catholics in the King's party were, however, of too much importance to allow the papal influence to be neglected; and during the protracted conclave, which ended in the election of Gregory XIV., the Duke of Luxemburg, being obliged to return from Rome to France, left a letter containing a full account of the condition of the kingdom, which was to be delivered into the hands of the successful candidate. The Spanish influence diverted Gregory from his design of replying to it, and the Duke wrote a second letter from Chartres,† in which he repeated the arguments which he had previously adopted to detach the Pope from the league. He reminded him of an expression which he had used in conversation with him before his elevation—"that it was necessary that the King of France should be King of France, and the King of Spain of Spain; as the grandeur of one would serve as a barrier to the other's ambition." But it was in vain that so many illustrious families of the French noblesse intreated him to act as a father to the nation; he was indebted to Spanish influence for his election, and

* Ibid. p. 87.

† Dated 8th April, 1591. Cayet, liv. 3. p. 418. Mem. de Nevers, vol. ii. p. 529.

was persuaded to pay attention to a letter which had been previously addressed to him by the Sixteen.* He wrote a warm letter in reply to his beloved sons, which conferred upon them his apostolical benediction, and announced that his nephew, Hercules Sfrondato, Duke of Montmarcian, was ready to go to their assistance with men and supplies.† A week after Landriano was appointed Nuncio, and set out for Paris, furnished with a *monitoire* denouncing further ecclesiastical vengeance upon the princes and nobles who followed the King's party.‡ The parliaments of Tours and Chalons attacked the *monitoire* with spirit, and passed decrees condemning the document to be publicly burned, and pronouncing severe penalties against any persons who should obey the instructions of the Nuncio, who was ordered to be arrested wherever he could be found.§ About the same time the King held a council, composed of the most eminent men of his party of all professions; after due deliberation he published two edicts; one annulling all the acts which the league had forced upon the late King; the other renewing his promise to maintain the catholic religion, although he could not avoid shewing his resentment to the conduct of the Pope. “We declare and protest,” says the King, “that we desire nothing more earnestly than the convocation of a free and holy council, or some notable assembly, competent to decide upon the differences respecting the catholic religion, &c.||

* Dated 24th February, 1591. Cayet, liv. 3. p. 411.

† Letter dated 12th May. Ibid. p. 431.

‡ *Monitoire*, dated 20th May. Cayet, p. 429. Villeroy, vol. 1. p. 277.

§ Davila, liv. 12. p. 426. *Hist. des derniers troubles*, vol. ii. p. 28. Cayet, liv. 3. p. 452. Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 430.

|| Dated Mantes, 4th July, 1591. Cayet, liv. 3. p. 448.

The parliament of Paris, and of the other places belonging to the league, published edicts condemning and annulling those of the royalists, and the Nuncio Landriano went to an assembly at Rheims, where the best means of promoting the object of his mission were discussed. Mayenne recommended moderation; but the ecclesiastics, with blind zeal, paid no attention to his advice, and Landriano issued orders for depriving of their employments all the clergy who adhered to Henry IV. When it appeared that no benefit resulted from this measure, the assembly, which was presided by Cardinal Pellevé, decided on making an application to Philip of Spain, for his assistance to maintain the King who should be elected at the approaching states-general. The president Jeannin was charged with the mission.* He went to Madrid, and represented to his catholic majesty the necessities of the league, the extreme danger which threatened the religion, and the immortal glory which he would obtain from preserving it in France by sending assistance. Philip was willing to help the league, provided he could serve his own purpose at the same time; and informed Jeannin that his intention was to marry his daughter Isabella to the Archduke Ernest, establish them on the throne of France, and give them the Netherlands as a dowry; he contended that the Infanta being the grand-daughter of Henry II. was much nearer to the crown than the Bourbons; and that the house of Austria being then made so deeply interested, would send reinforcements sufficient to enable them to free the country from the Prince of Bearn and the heretics.†

* Davila, liv. 12. p. 429. Villeroy, vol. 1. pp. 283 et seq.

† Maimbourg.—*Hist. de la Ligue*, liv. 4. p. 322.

Jeannin would not cause the King of Spain to think that such a measure would meet with decided opposition from the chiefs of the league, but made some cursory remarks upon the Salic law, without however destroying his hopes; by that means he obtained the promise of extensive help both in men and money. On his return to France, the president completely satisfied the Duke of Mayenne that he need not calculate upon assistance from Philip II. unless there were a prospect of placing the Infanta on the throne.* This intelligence created great distrust among the leaguers; the Sixteen became more violent in behalf of the Spaniards, while the parliament adhered to Mayenne, and boldly protested against the election of a foreign prince.

By a singular coincidence there was at the same time a division among the royalists; the young Cardinal of Bourbon (nephew of him who had been proclaimed King by the league) was induced to make an appeal to the catholicism of the royalists, on the ground of the King's delay in changing his religion. The time he had fixed upon for making the effort, was when a discussion was to take place respecting the publication of an edict favourable to the Huguenots. By timely information the King was able to frustrate the entire plan. The Cardinal was already in correspondence with Mayenne, Villeroy, and others of the league, and the unguarded way in which the King lived at Mantes induced his enemies to form a scheme for seizing upon his person. Divisions of troops from Paris and Rouen were to arrive simultaneously at Mantes; and as their attack would be aided by the party in the town, they entertained no doubt of succeeding. A letter was addressed to the

* Davila, liv. 12. p. 449—452.

Pope with an account of the proposed plan, but it fell into the hands of Sully, who immediately handed it to his sovereign. When the matter was investigated, and information had been collected by the King's friends, it was laid before the council. The chancellor Chiverny took the opportunity to exhort the King to change his religion, as the most efficacious manner of preventing such plots; but La Noue observed, that as the only allies that remained true to his majesty were the Queen of England and some protestant princes of Germany, such a measure might prove injurious to his cause; he admitted that such a change must be made in the end; but as the King of Spain and the Pope had been making great exertions to assist the league, it would be very injudicious to take any steps which might deprive the royal cause of the assistance of the Huguenots. Biron was of the same opinion, and the King took no further notice of the affair than to let the conspirators see they were discovered. He sent for the Cardinal, and in his presence completed the plans he had in contemplation. The edict in favour of the Huguenots was published without opposition; and the Count de Soissons, who had been concerned, was deprived of his governments of Poitou and Touraine; those charges were conferred upon the Prince of Conty, who was not in the secret; the contemplated attack upon Mantes was of course abandoned by the league directly it was known that the King was informed of it.*

The Cardinal of Bourbon at once relinquished all idea of the enterprise; his confidants Bellozane

* Davila, liv. 12. p. 412—421. Sully, liv. 4. De Thou, liv. 101.

and Du Perron were won over to the King's interests ; and from the apparent sincerity of his reconciliation with Henry IV. it has been contended that he was not really concerned in the plot, but that his name was made use of to promote the designs of others, who deceived him into a compliance with their measures.

While these schemes occupied the active men of both parties, the relative positions of the King and the league had been materially altered by different circumstances which had occurred in the early part of the year in other parts of the kingdom ; and as the royalists could now look forward to a happy conclusion of the war, they were less likely to engage in such schemes, which became more difficult to execute, and offered less chance of impunity in case of detection.

Les Diguieres, who commanded for the King in Dauphiny, took possession of Grenoble, and expelled the troops of the league from that province before the Duke of Savoy could send any aid. The Duke of Montpensier had been equally successful in Normandy, and the Prince of Conty had obtained great advantages in Poictou.* Turenne, who had been sent to request some assistance from Queen Elizabeth, was also on his road to join the King's army.† When the application was made to that princess, she was in hopes of obtaining some equivalent for the services which she could not avoid rendering to the opponent of Philip II. her chief enemy ; she dwelt upon the necessity of her traders having a port in

* Hist. des derniers troubles, vol. ii. p. 26. Cayet, liv. 3.

† His instructions and commission dated Gisors, October, 1590, are to be found in *Memoires d'Etat de Villeroy*, vol. iv. pp. 150 et seq.

France to compensate for Calais, which she said had been *usurped* by the Duke of Guise. Turenne adroitly parried her demand, by shewing that an alienation of any part of the kingdom would deprive the King of a great number of his friends, which would injure his cause much more than her assistance would benefit him. Turenne succeeded in obtaining a loan of a hundred thousand crowns, and the promise of six thousand men to be sent to Brittany. From London the envoy went to Holland where he obtained of the states-general three thousand men, and a promise to support them; and in Germany he raised four thousand cavalry and eight thousand infantry, with which he arrived at Vandy in Champagne in September, 1591.*

As soon the King knew that the foreign levies were on the road, he decided on leaving Mantes to go to meet them; and taking the route of Picardy he laid siege to Noyon towards the end of July. The league made several efforts to relieve the place, both by attempts to throw in reinforcements, and by creating a diversion by attacking other places, but without success; for after sustaining a furious cannonade, the garrison proposed to capitulate.† The King offered them very easy terms, requiring from them only a contribution of thirty thousand crowns. The little town of Pierre-fonts next engaged his attention; and while there he was joined by the Earl of Essex, who had been sent to his assistance with four thousand infantry, and five hundred horsemen; the Earl was accompanied by sixty gentlemen of distinction.‡

* Davila, liv. 12. p. 368—372. Cayet, liv. 3. p. 438.

† 17th August, 1591.

‡ 31st August. Davila, liv. 12. Cayet, liv. 3. Henry's letter to Elizabeth, thanking her for her kindness, is inserted in the *Mem. d'Etat de Villeroy*, vol. iv. p. 249.

The league, however, had some successes and advantages ; the Duke of Mayenne succeeded in taking Chateau-Thierry ; Guyonville, a leaguer, took Mirebeau in Burgundy ; the royalists were repulsed before Lamballe in Brittany ; and Honfleur was surprised and retaken by the league. The English forces had been sent to Brittany as Elizabeth had promised, and the Prince of Dombes and La Noue having joined them, the siege of Lamballe was commenced. The attack was so violent that the besieged had decided on abandoning the town, and retiring into a strong fort at hand ; but La Noue received a mortal wound, which so raised the hopes of the garrison, that they repaired the breach, and compelled the royalists to raise the siege.* This event grieved all the royalists, who had great confidence in the tried courage and probity of La Noue. The loss of such a captain was also felt more sensibly, as about the same time the Count de Chatillon died of a disorder caused by the great fatigues he had undergone ; his talents and firmness gave great reason for supposing he would have equalled his father, and his death was lamented by both catholics and protestants.†

On the fifteenth of August preceding, the young Duke of Guise had made his escape from the castle of Tours, where he had been imprisoned since his father's death. Some persons have thought it was connived at through bribery ; others, that the King was desirous of letting him loose upon the league to create a fresh party among them. He succeeded,

* Cayet, liv. 3. p. 467. Davila, liv. 12. p. 490. De Thou, liv. 101. p. 398. La Noue was removed to Moncontour, where he died 4th August, 1591.

† Francis de Coligny, Count de Chatillon, and Admiral of Guyenne, died 8th October, 1591, in the 35th year of his age.

however, in descending from the castle wall by the help of a knotted rope, which was carried secretly into the castle. His escape was discovered immediately, but good horses had been brought to the entrance of the town, so that he could not be overtaken.* The leaguers made great rejoicings on the occasion, and in a letter from the Sixteen to Philip II. the circumstance is alluded to in conjunction with the massacre of the St. Bartholomew, to shew how propitious the month of August had been to the catholic religion.† But the arrival of a popular prince by creating fresh interests, evidently weakened the league, and impeded their operations. Davila‡ unequivocally describes the Duke's escape from prison as a trouble for the Duke of Mayenne, and Villeroy§ mentions that from the time that the leaguers were joined by Guise they treated Mayenne with disdain.

CHAP. XLVII.

MURDER OF THE PRESIDENT BRISSON AND OTHERS;— SIEGE OF ROUEN.

PARIS continued to be so much inconvenienced by the King having possession of most places around, that

* Villeroy, vol. i. p. 283. Journal de Henri IV. vol. i. p. 175.
De Thou, liv. 101. Cayet, liv. 3.

† Villeroy, vol. iv. p. 257.

‡ Book 12. p. 453.

§ Mem. d'Etat, vol. i. p. 291.

Mayenne wrote to the Duke of Parma intreating him to return into France and relieve the Union. The Spanish general sent word in reply that he had not sufficient force to carry on the war in Flanders, and that he could do nothing without orders from Spain; but that he would aid the cause to the extent of his power, and remitted to Paris the sum of two hundred thousand florins, which was the only thing he could do for the league.*

In addition to this disappointment they received an account of the defeat of the army under the Duke of Montemarciano, whom the Pope had sent to their assistance. Although the supply had been granted to the league in the spring, a considerable time had elapsed before the levy was completed and ready to march; and the Duke of Montemarciano did not reach the frontier of Dauphiné till August, when he was attacked by the royalists under Lesdiguières. A dispute then arose between the Duke, Peter Cajetan, his lieutenant, and the Archbishop Matteucci, his commissary-general, which ended in Cajetan's withdrawing from the army with part of the troops. This was followed by several other desertions, and before Montemarciano arrived at Verdun, which was appointed for a rendezvous, an epidemic disease had arisen and made great ravages in his ranks.† At Verdun he was joined by the Dukes of Lorrain and Mayenne, and by a division of Spanish troops. The Jesuits were deeply interested in the success of this army, and four of their members accompanied Sfrondato, in order that they might at-

* Cayet, liv. 3. p. 439.

† Davila, liv. 12. p. 467. Cayet, liv. 3. p. 477.

tend to the militant affairs of the church, as well as its spiritual concerns.*

While the leaguers were disappointed on one hand, by the inefficiency of this reinforcement, they were alarmed on the other, by the accounts they received of the advance of an army from Germany to join the King. Turenne, it has been mentioned, had been employed to procure those levies, and arrived with them towards the end of September. When the King reviewed them in the plain of Vandy, in Champagne, they consisted of sixteen thousand men and four pieces of artillery. They were commanded by the Prince of Anhalt.† The service which Turenne had rendered the royal cause was so important, that the King interested himself in concluding his marriage with Charlotte de la Marck, heiress of the house of Bouillon. That lady had been sought in marriage by the Duke of Lorrain for his eldest son; but the late Duke of Bouillon, her brother, had, by his will, forbidden her to marry a catholic, and it was in vain to hope to set aside such an injunction, as all the protestant princes of Germany would have exerted themselves to maintain it.‡ By this marriage he became Duke of Bouillon, by which title he was subsequently styled; and about the same time he was elevated to the rank of a Marshal.§ On the evening of his wedding, when the

* *Additis quatuor e societate sacerdotibus, qui militibus sacra procurarent.* *Historiae Societatis Jesu, &c. auctore JOSEPHO JUVENCIO, lib. xvi. p. 365.* ROMÆ, 1710.

† 29 September, 1591. Cayet, liv. 3. p. 480.

‡ Marsollier.—*Hist. du Duc de Bouillon*, vol. ii. p. 38.

§ The marriage took place 11 October, 1591, but he did not take the oath as Marshal, till 15 March, 1592. In a letter of that date to Duplessis Mornay, he mentions that objections had been

King had retired to rest, Turenne set out with a body of choice soldiers, and surprised Stenay, a town belonging to the Duke of Lorrain, who sent troops to recover the place, but in vain.* Henry was highly pleased at the event, and replied, when he was told of it, “*Ventre Saint Gris!*” I would often conclude marriages, and soon get possession of my kingdom if the parties would make me such presents.†

The arrival of the Germans made such an addition to the King’s force that he resolved to execute a plan which he had meditated for a considerable time—it was the siege of Rouen, and for that purpose he set out for Normandy at the end of October, having divided his army into four bodies in order to keep his enemies in a state of uncertainty as to the point of his attack. He took one division to Noyon; Montpensier, with another, took the route of Crecy in Brié; Nevers remained at Vervins, which the King had taken a few days previously, and the Baron de Biron passed by St. Quentin into Normandy.‡

All this time the councils of the league were agitated by divisions and animosities: there had always been a few parties distinguished from each other by the degree of zeal which they displayed respecting their connexions with the court of Madrid, and Mayenne’s authority had been odious to many of them ever since his suppression of the council of the Union; but the enlargement of the young Duke made to his appointment on account of his religion. The delay which occurred between his *nomination* and *final reception* as Marshal, accounts for the incongruities between some of the French historians.

* Cayet, liv. 3. p. 482.

† De Bury.—*Hist. de Henri IV.* vol. ii. p. 124.

‡ Cayet, liv. 3. p. 482.

of Guise created a fresh division of interests. Some encouraged his ambition in order to set up a rival to Mayenne; while others, being satisfied that none but a native prince could ever be accepted by the nation for their King, proposed to avail themselves of the complicated state of affairs, and at once serve the league and the King of Spain, by elevating Guise to the throne, and marrying him to the Infanta, daughter of Philip II. To effect this the Sixteen addressed a letter to that King informing him how desirous they were to be under his government, and under that of his posterity, and intreating his catholic majesty to choose a son-in-law whom they would all obey and receive as their sovereign. Father Claude Mathieu, a Jesuit, was the bearer of this epistle, which was signed by the principal leaguers and doctors of the Sorbonne. But Chazeron a royalist, and governor of the Bourbonnais, intercepted this letter, and sent it to his master, who afterwards sent it to Mayenne; by which means the breach between him and the Sixteen was increased beyond all chance of accommodation.*

* Cayet, liv. 3. p. 504. The accounts of this letter differ very much as to the date. In the *Mem. d'Etat de Villeroy*, (vol. iv. p. 253) it is dated 20th September, 1591; De Thou, (liv. 102,) gives the date 20th November, but which is evidently an error, as the *preceding month* (August), is alluded to as being so very favourable to the Union; Cayet, liv. 3. p. 505, gives the 2nd of September; and Arnauld in pleading against the Jesuits, in 1594, describes it as dated the 2nd of November. The authenticity of the letter has never been questioned, and it is probable that the first letter being intercepted, a second was sent with a later date. This idea is supported by the *Journal de Henri IV*; for the writer alludes to Mathieu's mission in September (p. 181), and mentions the letter further on (p. 205,) as dated 20th November.

From that time the active leaguers were busy in creating a violent opposition to Mayenne and his party, which comprised all those who, notwithstanding their hatred to the King and the Huguenots, were still imbued with too much national feeling to consent either to the dismemberment of France or its subjection to a foreign prince. The Sixteen had the populace at their command, and to inflame them it was given out that Mayenne had augmented their contributions solely to enrich himself. The Spanish minister encouraged the party who were for placing themselves under the government of his master; as also did Segu, bishop of Placentia, the Pope's legate, whose functions ceasing on the death of Gregory XIV. had devoted himself entirely to the Spanish faction.*

As Mayenne was not then at Paris, the Sixteen sent four deputies to him at Rheims to demand certain changes, and to make complaints against some of the parliament, particularly the president Brisson. At their first interview, Mayenne received them haughtily, but afterwards he spoke to them in a manner calculated to conciliate their feelings, which he perceived were already too much irritated. He told them, that as the enemy was on the alert, he could not then attend to such business; and recommended them not to make any changes at that time, as their own cause would suffer from the advantage it would give their enemies. On the return of the deputies to Paris, the Sixteen expressed great indignation at the Duke's conduct, and came to a resolution to take the government of the town into their

* Davila, liv. 12. p. 470. Gregory XIV. died 15th October, 1591.

own hands. Inflammatory reports as usual were the means resorted to for making the people turbulent, and as the parliament was as odious to them as the Duke, they blackened both by giving out that the catholic religion was betrayed by Mayenne, and that the parliament was making every effort to give up the city to the King of Navarre.*

It was not long before an opportunity offered for executing their violent resolution. An attorney named Brigard had written a letter to his uncle who was a royalist, and resided at St. Denis, and sent the letter by a servant. As all persons who quitted Paris on that side were strictly searched at the barriers, the servant did not escape, but nothing was found on his person; he had, however, a bottle in his hand, which was broken, and by that means the letter was found. The troubled state of the times made every one adopt a mysterious style of communication, and the leaguers were satisfied that Brigard had turned royalist, and immediately took him to prison. His death was loudly called for, but the president, Brisson, declared Brigard innocent, and he then contrived to escape from Paris; the Sixteen were highly incensed on the occasion, and immediately held a consultation for avenging themselves on the president. There were, however, great difficulties in the execution of the plan, which was generally approved, and their meeting was adjourned several times; at last Bussy-le-Clerc succeeded in obtaining the signatures of a number of the council to a blank paper, under pretence of a new formule of the oath to be taken by the Union, which, however, he could not obtain without violence to some of them, who com-

* Davila, liv. 12. p. 473.

plained at being thus treated.* Thus furnished, Bussy held another meeting of his friends, who were the most violent men of the time ; Cromé, a counsellor ; Hamilton, curate of St. Côme ; Pelletier, curate of St. James, and others ; the blank paper was filled up with a sentence of death against the president Brisson, and Larcher and Tardif, two counsellors.†

Brisson was informed that his life was in danger, for assassins had been hired to murder him and five others in their houses ; and he who was to kill the president, while he pretended to consent to the proposal, sent him word to lose no time in leaving Paris ; he even undertook to convey him in safety to St. Denis. The president thanked him for his advice, but would not leave the city ; and on the morning of the fifteenth of November, as he was going from his house to the Palace of Justice, he was arrested on the Pont St. Michel, and conducted to the Chatelet, where his sentence of death was read to him without any form of trial. Cromé asked the president if he was not in correspondence with the King of Navarre, and why he had not sentenced Brigard to death ; to the first question he answered, “No !” to the other, “That he had been acquitted by a decree of the court, and not by him alone.” He was then told, that it was a great favour that he would not be publicly executed.† Brisson’s mind was so imbued with legal forms, that he demanded to be confronted with the witnesses who had deposed against him. Cromé made no other answer than a burst of laughter. Brisson expressed a wish to be permitted to finish a work upon jurisprudence, which

* Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 483. Mem. de Nevers, vol. ii. p. 620.

† Cayet, liv. 3. p. 506—509. † Cayet, liv. 3. p. 511-512.

was in progress ; his murderers laughed still more, and ordered him to be dispatched.* He was soon after hanged at a post inside the prison. Larcher and Tardif were treated in the same manner, and the following day their bodies were exposed at the Grève on a gibbet, with a paper placed over them, stating that they were traitors and heretics. It was expected that the people would have taken an interest in this affair, but the public tranquillity was not affected by it. Some blamed the deed, and others shrugged their shoulders ; but none, not even of the Spaniards, exhibited any satisfaction. The further exposure of the bodies was therefore useless, and they were taken down again the day after, and delivered to their friends for burial.†

Mayenne was at Laon ; when he was informed of what had occurred in Paris he immediately set out for the capital, accompanied by the Counts de Vaudemont, Brissac, Chaligny, and others, with seven hundred choice cavalry, leaving the president Jeanrin with the Duke of Guise, to watch his movements, and be a restraint upon him.‡ But Don Diego d'Ivarra, who had learned the cause of Mayenne's sudden departure, also set out for Paris to be ready to assist the partisans of Spain if they were in any danger. Mayenne arrived at Paris on the twenty-eighth of November, having added to his escort two regiments of infantry which were at Soissons, and two hundred horsemen who were at Meaux. As he entered Paris by the Porte St. Antoine, Boucher addressed him on behalf of the Sixteen, who were

* De Thou, liv. 102.—*Hist. du Parlement de Paris*, p. 162.

† Cayet, liv. 3. p. 515. Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 487.—*Journal de Henri IV.* vol. i. p. 195.

‡ 25th Nov. 1591. Davila, liv. 12. p. 479.

already in a great consternation, and had deliberated whether he should be allowed to enter the city ; they afterwards resolved to poignard him, and one of them desired the honor of giving him the first blow. Boucher happened to be clear of the murder of Brisson, for he was at Soissons at the time ; but directly he alluded to the subject, Mayenne said “Another time !” and passed on.*

Diego d'Ivarra, and the other Spanish ministers, waited upon him directly he arrived, and tried to persuade him to avoid showing any resentment for what had occurred ; for although the proper forms and proceedings were wanting, the act in itself was nevertheless good, and very useful to the preservation of religion. Mayenne replied to them with moderation ; but immediately commenced an examination of the force then in the city. He ordered the different officers to be at their posts, and the next morning seized all the avenues of the Rue St. Antoine. He then summoned Bussy-le-Clerc to surrender the Bastille. At first he refused, but when he found that none of the populace stirred in his behalf, and that the cannon from the arsenal was being placed against him, he consented to give up the fortress, on condition that his life should be spared.

Such excellent arrangements had been made by the provost and other officers, in placing soldiers in the different streets, and on the bridges, that the town was completely under subjection, and Mayenne saw that he could easily pursue his plans for punishing the cruelty of the Sixteen ; to which also he was

* Davila, liv. 12. p. 480. Cayet, liv. 3. p. 516. Villeroy, vol. i. p. 293.

urged by several good families of Paris, who entreated him not to suffer such an act to go unpunished. He therefore ordered Vitry to seize the most violent of the faction, and to have them hanged. Cromé escaped in the disguise of a Spanish soldier; but Louchart, Emonot, Anroux and Ameline, were taken without any difficulty, and received the same summary kind of execution that they had inflicted on the president Brisson.*

This display of firmness restored Mayenne's authority; but the number of concealed royalists increased very much in the bosom of the league, and prepared for assisting the cause of Henry IV. when his affairs were more matured. A coolness also arose between the French and Spanish captains, which impeded their operations, and prevented their deriving the advantage which was to have been expected from the return of the Duke of Parma into France with another army; that measure had been forced upon the King of Spain, on account of the siege of Rouen, which was at this time being pressed with vigour.

The Baron de Biron made his appearance before that town on the eleventh of November; and being joined by three thousand English under the Earl of Essex, he discharged a culverine as a sort of defiance. A number of the inhabitants immediately sallied forth, and attacked the royalists. After skirmishing for some time, they separated without any other result than the loss of a few men to both parties. Among those of the royalist party who were killed, was Walter Devereux, a relative of Lord Essex; who

* 4th Dec. 1591. Davila, liv. 12. p. 484. Cayet, liv. 3. p. 516.—*Journal de Henri IV.* p. 215—217. Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 490. Villeroy, vol. i. p. 295.

being engaged with Bois-rosé, a celebrated officer of the league, was mortally wounded in the throat by a pistol-ball.* Biron took up a position at Dernetal, a place at the distance of a league, and commenced his operations by making himself master of all the places in the neighbourhood ; he sent parties to collect all the provisions and other stores that were to be obtained in that part of the country, in order that he might derive benefit from them in two ways, during the blockade of Rouen ; his men would not be taken from the siege to seek for such supplies, and he deprived the enemy of a great resource. He took Gournay, Caudébec, and other places ; found large stores of grain at Louviers, and was well supplied with tents from Caen.†

Hitherto the league had been in suspense respecting the King's operations, for although it was considered certain that Rouen would ultimately be attacked, it was thought that Rheims would first occupy the royalists, and the siege of that place was generally expected. But the appearance of Biron, with his forces, put an end to all doubt, and preparations were made for promoting the defence of the town. Andrew de Brancas-Villars, the governor, was a man of most determined bravery ; he was Admiral of the league, and in all that party there was scarcely any individual who was better qualified for the task which was before him. He lost no time in collecting provisions and ammunition, and expelled from the town all persons who were suspected of being favourably inclined to the King. By the influence of Bauquemart, president of the parliament, the inhabitants were made to swear that they would

* Cayet, liv. 3. p. 501.

† Davila, liv. 12. p. 497.

denounce all who, by word or deed, supported the King of Navarre. Monks and priests were employed to animate the people by their discourses: and insolent letters addressed to the King were published as a means of encouraging a spirit of hatred to his person. Such exertions were made in consequence of the governor's orders, that within a fortnight he received in the city fifty pieces of artillery, a great quantity of ammunition, and a reinforcement of soldiers.*

The destiny of Rouen was remarkable; in the first civil war it had sustained a memorable siege in the cause of the reformed religion; on this occasion a more obstinate and more successful defence was maintained against the King, solely because he had been educated a protestant. The influence of the league had been so powerful there that the Huguenots were completely subdued, and the parliament was so zealous for the Union, that on one occasion they condemned to death some royalist prisoners, and had passed a decree, declaring that all followers of the King of Navarre, and all who refused to acknowledge Charles X. were guilty of high treason.†

The King did not arrive till the end of the month, but in the interval several sorties and skirmishes had been made. With a man of the character of Brancas-Villars this was a thing of course, but Lord Essex felt indignant at such a kind of warfare; his notions of chivalry were very exalted, on account of his education and residence at a court presided by a female; and he sent a letter, calling upon the besieged to come out and fight in the open plain.

* Cayet, liv. 3: p. 501. Davila, liv. 12. p. 500.—*Hist. des derniers troubles*, vol. ii. p. 30.

† 7th April, 1590.—*Hist. des derniers troubles*, vol. ii. p. 19.

Villars, in reply, gave permission to the Chevalier Picard to meet him alone, or with any number of men that might be agreed upon; but the high notions of the English earl were nettled by the proposal, and he immediately sent Villars himself a challenge to fight in any way he might think proper. After stating that he had in his army many persons of the same quality as Picard, he added: “but if you will fight on horseback or on foot, I will maintain that the King’s quarrel is more just than that of the league; that I am better than you; and that my mistress is fairer than yours. And if you will not come alone I will bring with me twenty persons, all of whom shall be equal to the rank of a colonel; or sixty, the least of whom shall be a captain.” Villars knew his duty as a general too well to accept such a challenge, and in replying, stated his willingness to meet the earl when the Duke of Mayenne had arrived to take the command of the town. “Not wishing, however,” said he, “to fail in replying to the conclusion of your letter, by which you declare yourself better than me, I tell you that you have lied, and that you lie every time that you attempt to maintain it. And as to the comparison of your mistress with mine, I believe you are not more correct in that than in your other assertions; at all events, that is not a subject that I think much about at present.”*

A herald was sent into Rouen on the part of the King, calling upon the inhabitants to return to their obedience by acknowledging him. An assembly was held in the city to consider what answer should be returned; and, on the second of December, the

* Cayet, liv. 3. p. 503.

herald was dismissed with only a verbal communication. He was desired to tell his master that the people of Rouen were all resolved to die rather than acknowledge a heretic for their King ; and that they had not less spirit to maintain their ancient religion than the Calvinists displayed in the support of their heresy. A solemn procession was then made, when an oath was publicly administered in unison with that message.*

The siege was then proceeded with in a spirited manner, but nothing could damp the enthusiasm which animated the garrison of Rouen ; their sorties were bold, frequent, and successful. Every day produced some display of that chivalrous bravery which characterised this age : the inhabitants were aware of the importance of their town to the Union, and were, therefore, encouraged by the certainty that something would be done by their partisans towards raising the siege. Indeed, the army of the league was then on the road to help them, and that intelligence excited the King to more vigorous attacks ; while at the same time, Villars feeling a wish to have all the honour of beating off so formidable an enemy, made more determined sorties than before.

It was towards the end of December that the King was informed of the return of the Duke of Parma into France, and that he was on his way to raise the siege. Henry IV. had already sent a letter to Queen Elizabeth, informing her of his situation ; but on learning that the enemy was actually approaching, he dispatched Duplessis Mornay to make a more powerful appeal to her on behalf of the protestant cause. At Dieppe, Duplessis met a messenger, sent

* Cayet, liv. 4. p. 12.

by Elizabeth to order the immediate return of Lord Essex. That was discouraging, but he pursued his journey, and arrived in London on the fourth of January, 1592. For ten days he was occupied in making application for assistance, but without effect, although he had the good wishes and interest of the lord treasurer Burleigh. The Queen's conduct was founded on caprice; she wanted back her favourite Essex, and obstinately refused to grant the assistance; but afterwards, when her commands were obeyed, and Essex had returned to England, she consented to send over a reinforcement to the King.*

A few days after the King had dispatched Duplessis, he was joined by Count Philip of Nassau, who arrived with a Dutch fleet, having on board three thousand infantry, and some artillery and ammunition.† This was a great assistance to the besiegers, who were then enabled to batter the town from the river; but the courage of the besieged appeared to increase with the vigour of the attack, and their destructive sorties were incessantly made. Villars, however, discovered, that besides the attacks of the royal army he had to guard against internal treason; he learned that there were concealed royalists in the town; and after a vigilant investigation, aided by the manœuvres of a lawyer named Mauclerc, who pretended to be a royalist, a plot was discovered for opening one of the gates to the King's forces. Three persons named by Mauclerc were seized, tortured and hanged; and to deter others from joining in any similar scheme, a new edict was published, ordering the same punishment for any who were con-

* Mem. de Duplessis, vol. ii. pp. 134 et seq.

† 3rd January, 1592. Cayet, liv. 4. p. 16. Sully, liv. 4.

cerned in such plots, and offering large rewards to all who informed against them.*

Meanwhile the King had received intelligence that the Duke of Parma had quitted La Fere in Picardy, having left behind his heavy ordnance, which shewed that he meant to proceed at once to Rouen, without employing his time before any town in possession of the royalists. He immediately wrote to Duplessis Mornay informing him of the circumstance, with a view of making some impression upon Elizabeth, by an account of his desperate situation. In a postscript he added, that his opinion was confirmed by an intercepted letter from Mayenne to Villeroy : " If," says Henry, " the Queen at once sends me the aid which you are employed to solicit, I hope to be able to combat my enemies without raising the siege, and trust that God will grant me the victory. Still, according to the reports they circulate, their force is very great. I address her (the Queen) a word on the consequences dependent upon my success, not only to myself, but also to all Christendom."†

The united forces of the league amounted to eighteen thousand infantry and five thousand cavalry ; the Dukes of Parma and Mayenne had marched to Peronne, where a consultation was held respecting their future plans ; they resolved to proceed direct to Rouen, and throw in some supplies if they could not succeed in raising the siege.‡ The King's expectations of assistance from England were sadly damped by the letters he received from Duplessis Mornay, who stated that Elizabeth persisted

* 7th January, 1592. *Ibid.* p. 14.

† *Mem. de Duplessis*, vol. ii. p. 162. ‡ *Cayet*, liv. 4. p. 18.

in refusing the supplies.* He decided in consequence on leaving the principal part of his army before the town, under the care of Marshal Biron; while he set out with the elite of his cavalry to reconnoitre the enemy and harass them as they approached. With this object in view he quitted Rouen on the twenty-ninth of January.†

He advanced to Folleville, a village on the borders of Picardy, before he could learn the route by which the enemy was advancing; but being informed they were in that quarter, he sent parties to look out while he was similarly employed with a body of one hundred and twenty horsemen. The King had proceeded thus about a league, when Lavardin, who was by his side, discovered a body of Spanish soldiers who halted near some trees; they were about to charge upon them when a large body of cavalry came up and a skirmish ensued, which ended by the leaguers falling back upon their main body; the King also withdrew to Berteville.‡ This encounter was followed by another a few days after near Aumale,§ when the King fell in with the picquets of the league, at a time when he was accompanied by only two hundred light horse, and about three hundred gentlemen. The sight of a few soldiers appeared insignificant to the King's party, and no one expected they would offer any resistance; but presently the enemy's main body appeared, marching in the most compact order, a measure which the Duke of Parma had adopted to prevent a surprise, which he considered probable on account of the King's intrepid character, and venturesome disposition. In a very

* This letter was dated 10th January, 1592. Mem. de Duplessis, vol. ii. p. 152.

† Davila, liv. 12. p. 529.

‡ Davila, liv. 12. p. 531. Mem. de Sully, liv. 4. p. 56.

§ 4th February, 1592.

short time the King's party was surrounded by two troops of dragoons (*arquebusiers à cheval*) who commenced a fire upon them. Most of the gentlemen were without their helmets; they fought, however, with great resolution, and maintained their ground until a division of infantry came from the army to support their companions. A retreat then became necessary, especially as a great many of the King's party were killed; but as it was known that the King was there, and the leaguers called out to each other what a prize was in their reach, they made still greater exertions to prevent his escape. The danger to which Henry IV. was exposed on this occasion was very great; and besides losing a great many of his followers, he was himself wounded by a musket ball. The fortunate arrival of some royalist troops assisted his retreat; but after all it is doubtful whether any of the party could have escaped, had not the Duke of Nevers advanced with a strong division of cavalry. It was greatly to be feared that this affair, which was much magnified by report, would cause confusion and alarm in the army before Rouen; and in consequence it was desirable that every possible impediment should be placed to delay the enemy's march. As the small town of Neufchatel-en-Bray was in the direct road, a defence of that place might detain the Duke of Parma a short time, and allow the King to take further measures. Givry was in consequence, posted in Neufchatel with seven hundred men; the King retired to Dieppe to repose for the benefit of his wound, which, however, was not very serious; and the Duke of Nevers returned with the rest of the division to the camp before Rouen.*

* Mem. de Tavannes, p. 149. Davila, liv. 12. Cayet, liv. 4.
De Thou, liv. 102. Mem. de Sully, liv. 4.

The Duke of Parma had the reputation of being the most cautious general of his time : he always avoided an engagement when he could; and carefully provided for a retreat whenever he entered a country occupied by an enemy. He would not therefore leave Neufchatel behind him in the hands of the royalists, and summoned Givry to open the gates on the eleventh of February. The town offered so little means of defence, that a refusal to surrender, which was the consequence, appeared an affront to the Duke ; and to resent it, he brought up his artillery and opened a cannonade. Givry had been ordered to act according to circumstances, and not waste the lives of those who were with him: he accordingly capitulated directly a breach was made, and obtained very honourable terms.* This affair detained the Duke only four days, but that was of great service to the King ; for the army of the league had no means of obtaining provisions in that part of the country, and as parties of cavalry were out to intercept their convoys, the stock which was carried with them began to diminish sensibly.† Besides which, the Duke was informed that the King was again in the field with a strong force ready to attack him ; the movements of the army were therefore made with extreme caution, as it approached the neighbourhood of Rouen. Parma and Mayenne were both satisfied that they could do nothing to relieve the place, without risking a general engagement ; they held a council of war, and resolved on preparing to attack Dieppe as a diversion.‡ This decision created

* Cayet, liv. 4. p. 20. Davila, liv. 12. p. 541. Sully, liv. 4. rather blames Givry for not holding out longer. Mathieu, vol. ii. liv. 1. p. 102. says, “ the place could be forced in an hour.”

† Davila, liv. 12. p. 542.

‡ Cayet, liv. 4. p. 21.

murmurs in the army of the league ; and the French nobles complained of the Duke of Parma for not advancing on several occasions, when by so doing he might have put an end to the war.* Parma on his side pressed Mayenne so closely to promise the crown of France to the Infanta, that he and many of the nobles were ready to treat with the King if he would but abjure.† The King meanwhile was hovering about the leaguers, and kept them in constant alarm. On one occasion he had intelligence that the Duke of Guise had taken possession of Bures, a small town within a few miles of Dieppe. He was then at Bacy, a distance of seven leagues ; and having appointed a rendezvous not far from Bures for the rest of his army, he set out with two thousand cavalry, two thousand Reitres, five hundred dragoons, and as many foot soldiers, to be ready to assist him, if attacked in the woody country through which he had to pass. His couriers fell in with a small party of the enemy, and a skirmish ensued when some of the leaguers were killed ; several were also taken prisoners, among whom was the Count de Chaligny, brother of the Duke of Mercœur, and of the Queen Dowager. The fugitives returned into Bures, and gave an alarm ; otherwise a considerable number of persons of rank would have been captured. Guise's baggage and standard fell into the King's hands ; and all in the town who made any resistance were put to the sword, to the number of two hundred. The Duke of Bouillon and the Baron de Biron, pursued the fugitives to a considerable distance.‡

* Davila, liv. 12. p. 540.

† Mem. d'Etat de Villeroy, vol. i. p. 309.

‡ 17 Feb. 1592. Mem. de Duplessis, vol. ii. p. 182. De Thou, liv. 102.

A letter containing an account of this affair, was sent to Queen Elizabeth, when the King made another appeal for assistance. “ Believe me, madam,” says Henry, “ if I had but this favour from you, I would soon give an account of these folks, and make them glad to get back in safety to look after their own affairs ; but you must consider that I have to continue the siege of Rouen, which I will not abandon, at the same time that I keep the field against them. We are, madam, in that position, that the armies look at each other, and would have engaged already if they had as much resolution to help Rouen, as I have to continue the siege, and carry it before them.” Henry concluded by observing, that she could not suffer so great an undertaking to be abandoned, for want of such trifling assistance, and when it was on the point of succeeding.* But the Queen would not yield to any importunity, and a lapse of two months occurred before a reinforcement was sent.†

All this time Villars continued to defend the city with success. Being well informed by spies of the state of the royal army, he made arrangements for a general sortie, when the King’s entrenchments were attacked at once on three different points. The royalists were taken unawares, and became an easy prey: Bois-rosé who conducted a division in the sortie, penetrated to the park of artillery, drove away the Lansquenets placed near it, carried off five pieces of cannon, and spiked two others. Marshal Biron was then at Dernetal; he was soon informed of the affair, and immediately hastened to the camp.

* Mem. de Duplessis, vol. ii. p. 185.

† Its arrival is mentioned in a letter from Duplessis Mornay, dated 16th April, 1592.—*Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 197.

The sortie had been made at seven in the morning, and for two hours the leaguers had carried all before them. Biron's arrival compelled them to retreat ; but they effected it in excellent order, not having lost more than forty men, while the royalists had above five hundred men killed, besides some made prisoners.*

The news of this exploit compelled the Duke of Parma to make an effort to relieve the town ; especially as he received a letter from Villars, informing him that the royalists had begun to press the siege more vigorously, in order to efface the effects of their late misfortune. A reinforcement of eight hundred men was thrown into Rouen on the eighth of March, which being reported to the King, brought him back again to the camp in a few days, when he prepared for still greater efforts against the place. Within ten days a very considerable breach was made in the wall, and Villars wrote to Mayenne that he should be obliged to capitulate unless he were relieved early in the ensuing month.† At this time the King's army experienced a considerable reduction by a number of persons going to their homes ; and the Dukes of Mayenne and Parma were aware of that circumstance, as well as of the absence of several parties sent out for fresh levies ; they therefore took an opportunity when the King had gone in the direction of Dieppe to make a forced march and relieve Rouen. They arrived there on the evening of the twentieth of April, and the royalists were unable to prevent their entering the

* 26 Feb. 1592. Cayet, liv. 4. p. 21—25. Mem. de Tavannes, p. 140.

† Journal de Henri IV. vol. i. p. 244.

town, which they did the next day, and a *Te Deum* was sung on the occasion.*

This unexpected reinforcement occasioned great joy among the leaguers; but its advantages were very trifling; for their supply of provisions was so small, that the Dukes were unable to relieve Rouen in that respect. Parma wished to follow up his advantage, by attacking the King; but Mayenne persuaded him to lay siege to Caudebec, where they would find large stores of grain, and by taking that place they would lay open the passage of the river.†

Caudebec was invested on the twenty-fourth of April, and surrendered three days after. This conquest cost the Duke of Parma a severe wound by a musket ball; and he was unable to keep possession of the place many days, for the King had sent for the garrisons out of all the neighbouring towns, and having by that measure gained an addition of three thousand horsemen, and twice as many infantry, he was able to blockade completely the army of the league. Skirmishes took place every day, but the royalists gradually encroached on their enemies' position. The leaguers at the same time were suffering greatly from the want of provisions, and, to add to their disasters, the King succeeded in cutting off a division of their light cavalry quartered at Ranson, on which occasion a large quantity of baggage, plate, and money, fell into the hands of the royalists. In such a condition escape was very difficult; decampment by night, or fighting his way through the ranks of his opponents, were the only alternatives of the Duke of Parma; and on the night of the twenty-

* Cayet, liv. 4. p. 26-27. Davila, liv. 12. p. 557.

† Cayet, liv. 4. p. 29. Perefixe, liv. 2.

second of May he succeeded in transporting his entire army across the Seine by means of a number of boats and pontoons sent down from Rouen the previous evening.

Directly the King was informed of this movement he hastened to the Pont de l'Arche, but Parma was too far advanced to allow him any chance of success if he pursued him ; the Duke made the greatest possible haste, recrossed the Seine at St. Cloud, and without entering Paris, pursued his march incessantly, until he arrived at Chateau Thierry.* It has been insinuated that Marshal Biron was the cause of the Spanish army's successful evasion from the King's grasp ; his son, the Baron de Biron, proposed to prevent the enemy's passing in the direction of the river, if the King would intrust him with a division of the army. The Marshal prevented the adoption of the proposal, but was nevertheless exceedingly angry with his son for thinking of such a thing ; and asked him with an oath, " if he wished to send them all back to grow cabbages at Biron ?" He afterwards told him that such an enemy should never be ruined entirely, for the King would then have but little consideration for his captains, as their services would be no longer necessary.†

The siege of Rouen was in reality at an end, but hostile operations were still continued in the neighbourhood ; and as the possession of Quillebœuf by the King's troops rendered great vigilance necessary for fear of a sudden attack, Villars determined to make himself master of that place. For that purpose he obtained some reinforcements from Mayenne, who

* Cayet, Davila, Mathieu, et De Thou et Brantome, *discours sur les belles retraites*.

† Perefixe, liv. 2. Brantome, vol. ix. p. 164.

returned to Rouen after accompanying the Duke of Parma as far as Charenton. The siege of Quillebœuf was begun on the fourth of July, and was conducted by Villars himself. The Count de Thorigny, Crillon, and a few gentlemen threw themselves into the place to assist Bellegarde, who was the temporary governor, but who at that time had not more than sixty men with him, and they unprovided with the requisites for sustaining a siege. The gentlemen took with them considerable quantities of provisions and ammunition; and, notwithstanding the vigour with which the place was attacked, they repelled two assaults, after which the leaguers desisted and returned to Rouen.*

The King was then besieging Epernay in Champagne, and was unable to send relief to Quillebœuf; but in one of his letters he stated, that knowing Crillon was there, he felt no uneasiness; a compliment of the most flattering kind to that officer, which was the more gratifying as it was made by so warlike a prince. Epernay surrendered to the King in the beginning of August: that siege cost the life of Marshal Biron, whose head was struck off by a cannon ball as he was reconnoitring.†

From Epernay the King went to St. Denis, where he again renewed his plan of blockading Paris; but soon after hearing that the Duke of Parma was making preparations to enter France with another army, he went into Picardy to be ready to attack him on his march. The Duke was at Arras to meet some

* Cayet. liv. 4. Davila, liv. 12, et Vie de Crillon, vol. ii. p. 113.

† Brantome, vol. ix. p. 150. Cayet, liv. 4. p. 41. Mem. de Sully, liv. 5. p. 107.

deputies and collect his forces; and while there he died.* The wound he had received at Caudebec had materially injured his constitution, and contributed to hasten his death. That event, and the urgent recommendation of Duplessis Mornay, induced the King to proceed to Tours, where his presence was necessary in consequence of some negotiations under discussion.†

During the year 1592, different parts of France had been the scenes of warfare and hostilities, producing different results in their operations. In June the Prince of Conti was completely defeated before Craon in Anjou by the Duke of Mercœur;‡ and afterwards, in the month of December, he was obliged to raise the siege of Rochefort.§ Lesdiguières, in an opposite quarter, maintained a long campaign against the leaguers and the Duke of Savoy; during which Antibes was taken and retaken, and the war was subsequently carried into Piedmont. On the arrival of the Duke of Epernon in Provence, Antibes once more fell into the hands of the royalists, and the leaguers, under the Duke of Joyeuse, were defeated at Villemur.|| About the same time the Duke of Bouillon gained a victory over Amblize, Grand Marshal of Lorrain, who was besieging Beaumont, a small town near Sedan. The attack from without being seconded by a sortie from the town, the be-

* 2nd December, 1592.

† Mem. de M. Duplessis, vol. ii. p. 290.

‡ Cayet, liv. 4. p. 35. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 272. De Thou, liv. 103.

§ Mem. de Duplessis, vol. ii. p. 289.

|| 19th Oct. 1592. Cayet, liv. 4. pp. 55 et seq. De Thou, liv. 103.

siegers were completely routed, and their leader and seven hundred men killed.* Bouillon afterwards took Dun, a small town on the Meuse, but not without exertion, as it was very well defended.

CHAP. XLVIII.

NEGOCIATION FOR A PEACE ;—ASSEMBLY OF THE STATES-GENERAL AT PARIS ;—CONFERENCE AT SURESNE ;—ABJURATION OF HENRY IV.

THE Duke of Parma's death disconcerted the measures of Philip II., who had also the mortification of finding that his party was losing ground in France, for notwithstanding the military operations of the year 1592, negotiations had been carried on between Duplessis Mornay and Villeroy. At the end of March M. de Fleury delivered to Duplessis a letter from the president Jeannin to Villeroy, containing the substance of what was required of the King by the nobles of the league. They were resolved to conclude a peace with the King on his promising to become a catholic, and authorised Villeroy to treat upon that basis,† but as they did

* 8th Oct. 1592. Cayet, liv. 4. p. 68—70. De Thou, liv. 103, et Marsollier, *Hist. du Duc de Bouillon*, vol. ii. p. 51—53.

† The terms as related by Villeroy were as follows. The King to engage to be instructed for his conversion, and to declare his intention to support the Roman catholic religion. The exercise of that religion to be restored wherever it had been suppressed, and the

not desire any haste which might hurt the King's character, they proposed that he should privately treat with the Pope for a few months respecting a reconciliation, to effect which they would lend him secretly their influence and assistance. The treaty was not to be made public until the King was ready to declare himself, for which they assigned as a reason, that they would not give the King of Spain a pretext for being their enemy. Duplessis informed his master that he did not like the propositions; "it appears to me," says he, "in a report on the subject,* that they only desire a conference, in order to pacify those of their party who cry out for peace; by shewing that it is not their fault that it is not made." But a few days after he had an interview with Villeroy when the proposal was drawn up to be communicated to his majesty. To reconcile the Pope with Henry IV., and put an end to the desolating wars which afflicted France, appeared then the chief desire of the party which had sent Villeroy; for at the conclusion of his dispatch Duplessis stated, "that no objection was made to the reformed religion remaining according to the existing edicts."†

It seems, however, that Mayenne was not inclined

clergy to be restored to their former privileges. If *it were right to tolerate* the exercise of any other religion, there should be allowed no greater privilege than existed in 1585. Every thing that had occurred since the death of the Guises to be forgotten, and no inquiry to be made respecting any circumstance excepting certain cases reserved in preceding edicts, in which the King's death was not to be made a pretext for troubling innocent persons. The memory and character of the Cardinal and Duke of Guise to be restored, but without hurting that of the late King, &c. &c.—*Mem. d'Etat*, vol. i. p. 343—346.

* Dated 28 March, 1592. *Mem. de Duplessis*, vol. ii. p. 224.

† Dated 4 April. 1592. *Ibid.* p. 236.

to a pacification; for Villeroy in one of his letters observes, "I think that M. de Mayenne ought at once to accept the peace, and that if he does not, he will curse the lost occasion;" and further on he adds, "it is very strange that Mayenne should write to the towns of his party, that the King is not inclined for peace, for there is no occasion for it."*

But whatever may have been the cause, the negotiation was suddenly broken off; and Villeroy either to preserve himself from the imputation of inability, or to give vent to his hatred of the Huguenots, has announced to the world, that Duplessis made public what they had agreed to keep secret, and thus prevented the conclusion of the treaty.† On the other hand, we are informed that the negotiation was so far advanced, that the King in full council gave orders to draw up an edict founded thereon; but that Biron, d'Aumont, and others being jealous that Duplessis, a Huguenot, should be entrusted with the affair, and fearing lest the treaty should be concluded without the King's conversion, they availed themselves of the first opportunity which presented itself for breaking it off.‡ Mayenne himself soon afforded them an occasion, by sending privately a stipulation for the government of Burgundy, for himself and his heirs, with other extravagant demands for his family.§

The rupture of the negotiations did not, however, prevent the number of the King's friends in Paris from increasing; and towards the end of the year they found themselves so powerful that they openly

* Mem. de Duplessis, vol. ii. p. 246.

† Villeroy, vol. i. p. 366 et 7.

‡ Mem. de Duplessis, vol. ii. p. 248.

§ Vie de Duplessis Mornay, p. 175.

proposed to send to the King, for the purpose of requesting freedom for their trade.* Mayenne succeeded in over-ruling the proposition; but the strength of the *Politiques* was exhibited, and the known force of their party materially affected the subsequent affairs of the league in Paris.

It was under such circumstances that the Duke of Mayenne issued a proclamation convoking the States-general;† a measure which was pressed upon him by the Sixteen, by the Spanish minister, and by Pope Clement VIII.,‡ whose legate, Cardinal Segu, also published an exhortation to all the catholic royalists, by which they were called upon to desert the King, and join the assembly for choosing a prince of the true faith.§ The states did not meet till the twenty-fifth of January, 1593, when the deputies went in procession to Notre Dame to hear mass, and a sermon against Henry IV. and the Salic law.||

The principal personages collected on this occasion were so destitute of every thing calculated to command respect, that the mere assembling of the states excited the derision of the people at large. Some royalists promoted that feeling by the publication of satirical pieces, which opened the eyes of the hitherto credulous populace. The *Satyre Menippee* is familiar to all who have any acquaintance with the history of this period; it was the

* Cayet, liv. 4. p. 73.

† Dated, December, 1592; registered and published 15th January, 1593. Villeroy, vol. vi. p. 167—191.

‡ Hypolite Aldobrandini, a Florentine; he was elected 30 January, 1592. Innocent IX. (Fachinetto) who succeeded Gregory XIV. lived only two months after his elevation to the pontificate.

§ Cayet, liv. 5. p. 116. Villeroy, vol. vi. p. 192—212.

|| Hist. de la Ligue, vol. ii. p. 357.

chief of those works which appeared at this time; and notwithstanding the ludicrous description which it contains of the states-general, it is less a satire, in itself, than a satirical detail of facts. The known characters of two of the leading ecclesiastics, who figured in the assembly, was a more severe libel on the cause, than any invention could be. Dr. Rose, bishop of Senlis, was a fanatical and debauched priest; he preached assassination, and the necessity of the catholic faith; and seduced the daughter of the president Neuilly who addressed herself to him for confession; while Espinac, Archbishop of Lyons, his compeer, was publicly known to live in incest with his sister.* The characters of Cardinals Pellevé and Segu, and the deportment of the inferior clergy, were quite in unison with the interested ambition of the Lorrain princes and their adherents; and the nation at last discovered that their civil wars had been fomented and carried on for the benefit of the King of Spain, and to promote the temporal interests of the Pope; and that the principal actors in the affair were so destitute of patriotism and justice, that they joined in oppressing the nation, in order to obtain the recompence which was held up to their view in those quarters.

The election of a King, by the states-general, would have been very injurious to the cause of Henry IV.; he therefore went with his court to Chartres, to be more ready to act according to circumstances. The first days of the assembly were passed in mat-

* Hist. de la Sorbonne, vol. ii. p. 72. Mayenne made great interest with Clement VIII. to obtain a cardinal's hat for Espinac; but that pontiff would not consent, and told D'Ossat that Espinac's bad reputation *en matière des femmes* was the reason.—*Lettres du Cardinal D'Ossat*, part 2. p. 149. Edit. in folio, 1624.

ters of ceremony, and before the deputies were able to decide upon the proper mode of proceeding, and were canvassing the claims of various parties supposed to be entitled to the honor, a messenger arrived with an address from the catholic royalists, proposing a conference in the neighbourhood of Paris, as the best means of restoring peace to the country.* When the message was made known, the legate declared that it was not only unworthy of a reply, but that the person who brought it deserved punishment; he at the same time pronounced it to be full of heresy.† The Sorbonne were zealous in their exertions to prevent the proposal from being accepted; and the legate, the Spanish minister, and the Sixteen were indefatigable on the occasion. The furious Pelletier in a sermon, declared that the conference would be the greatest misfortune which could befall religion. But Villeroy and Jeannin had sufficient influence to have the subject taken into consideration.‡

The reply to the address of the royalist catholics was a month under discussion; at last the assembly decided that they would not treat directly or indirectly with the King of Navarre, or any other heretic, upon religious points; but that they would confer with the catholics of his party, upon the means of restoring peace to the nation; the whole of the discussion to be under the sanction of the legate. A letter was in consequence written on the fourth of March, 1593, and sent to the royalists at Chartres. Other letters passed between the parties and at last

* Dated Chartres, 27 January, 1592-3. Cayet, liv. 5. p. 112. Villeroy, vol. vi. p. 213.

† Villeroy, vol. ii. p. 34.

‡ Journal de Henri IV. vol. i. pp. 336 et 347.

the village of Suresne was fixed upon as the place of a conference.*

The arrival of the Duke de Feria, with extraordinary powers from the King of Spain, encouraged the fanatical party in their opposition to a conference; but the general feeling could not be suppressed, and deputies from both parties met at the appointed place, on the twenty-third of April.† It is well known that this conference ended in the abjuration of protestantism by Henry IV.; and to detail the substance of what passed at the numerous meetings, would be as tedious as it would be useless. Repeated adjournments took place, and the King being desirous of conferring every respect upon so important a proceeding, invited a considerable number of ecclesiastics to meet him at Mantes. The clergy of the league were invited, as well as the royalists. "I have resolved," said the King in his letter, "in order if possible to remove every scruple in their obedience to me, on account of the difference of my religion, to receive instruction respecting the causes of the schism which is in the church."‡ The news of this proceeding spread an alarm among the protestants, which was not dispelled by a proclamation, summoning their deputies to attend at Mantes on the twentieth of July.§ Duplessis, in a letter to

* *Journal de Henri IV. Et Cayet, liv. 5. in loc. Villeroy, vol. vi. pp. 224 et seq.*

† *Mem. d'Etat de Villeroy, vol. vi. p. 286.* A considerable part of the 6th and 7th volumes of this work is occupied with accounts of the conference of Suresne. They were not composed by Villeroy, but have been added to his collection. I believe they were published at the time, under the title of *Journal de la Conférence de Suresne.*

‡ Dated 18 May, 1593. *Cayet, liv. 5. p. 179.*

§ This proclamation was dated 25 of May, 1593.

his friend Servin, laments that as the King was resolved on being instructed, he did not invite the protestant ministers to meet the catholic prelates, for it will be, said he, *arma sine pulvere.** And in a letter to another person he writes, “I do not perceive that the bishops are called to enter into any argument, and therefore the truth will be neither examined nor defended; but, if it is for a mere matter of form, that the assembly is convoked, the affair being already decided, as it is said, it would be too great a scandal to truth to place it in discussion where it should prevail, only to make it yield as vanquished.†

The conference had naturally produced a truce between the contending parties; but the King suspected that the Spaniards were availing themselves, of the opportunity to press more diligently the election of the Infanta, as the probable conversion of the King would render it impossible, if it were not effected immediately. Great efforts were also made by that party to increase their force, and obtain supplies for Paris. Henry IV. was then induced to renew hostilities, and took Dreux towards the end of June.‡

The league was perplexed at the loss of Dreux, which was almost their only remaining town in the neighbourhood of Paris; and many of their party were wavering, in consequence of a report that the King would certainly abjure before long; it was therefore urgent to bring the assembly to some decision, which was accordingly pressed by the

* Letter dated, 31 May. Mem. de Duplessis, vol. ii. p. 314.

† Mem. de Duplessis, vol. ii. p. 324.

‡ Cayet, liv. 5. p. 205. Mem. de Duplessis, vol. ii. p. 331.

Spanish agents. On this occasion the parliament resumed its independence, and with a spirit of patriotism which the fate of Brisson could not daunt, they passed a decree declaring the Salic law inviolable, and protested against the election of a King by the states.* The president Lemaitre was ordered to remonstrate with Mayenne against any treaty being made to transfer the crown of France to a foreign prince, under the pretext of religion; and to call upon him to bring about a peace, as soon as possible, on account of the extreme necessity of the people. But though so often foiled, the Spanish agents would not desist; and they continued to exert themselves to have the Duke of Guise and the Infanta placed upon the throne.

But nothing could preserve their falling influence when the ceremony of publicly abjuring protestantism had taken place at St. Denis.† The King had long been satisfied that unless he joined the Romish church he must pass his whole life in warfare, which would waste his country with fire and sword.‡ Many other circumstances concurred in influencing him to change his religion; his favourite mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrées, wished to see the country pacified, as the only means by which her prospect could be realised of being married to the King. An expression has been currently attributed to him which is extremely probable; when his Huguenot friends were entreat-

* This decree dated 30 June, 1593, gave great offence to the Duke of Mayenne; and the Archbishop of Lyons went into a violent passion on account of it.—*Mem. de Nevers*, vol. ii. p. 636.

† 25th July, 1593.

‡ The following expression is attributed to Sully; *Il est nécessaire que vous soyez papiste, et que je demeure réformé*.—See *Dictionnaire Historique, Art. Sully*.

ing him not to abandon them, he is said to have answered, “*Ventre St. Gris!* Paris is well worth a mass.” But the catholics in general declare this to be an invention of the Huguenots, who being vexed at losing so illustrious a chief were determined to make it appear that in his heart he had not forsaken them. The sincerity of his conversion has in consequence been strenuously insisted upon by their opponents. Cayet, who also abjured the protestant religion, takes great pains to shew that even while the King was avowedly a Huguenot, he sincerely believed in the doctrine of the *real presence*.* We have, however, his majesty’s letter to the fair Gabrielle, written on the evening before his abjuration,† which shews that he did not renounce the faith in which he had been educated without some repugnance; much more indeed than he would have felt if he had been so satisfied upon the doctrines of the church of Rome; “To-morrow,” says he, “I take the perilous leap.” His situation as sovereign and common parent of a suffering nation, place him beyond the reach of censure for a want of firmness. The protestant theologian may blame his abjuration in as unqualified a manner as the popish ecclesiastic bestows his approbation; but it is to be borne in mind that by becoming a catholic, Henry IV. was enabled to restore a national existence to France, and posterity has ennobled his name by the title of the Great. Happily the rights of conscience are now so fully admitted that no one presumes to question the sincerity of another’s opinions; we are, therefore, bound to abstain from inquiring whether this King’s convic-

* Cayet, liv. 5. pp. 148—222.

† This letter, with several others written by Henry IV. is inserted in the 2nd vol. of *Journal de Henri III.* as well as in the *Journal de Henri IV.* vol. i. p. 472.

tions were real or pretended ; and thus extend to his memory a privilege which could not exist while he lived, on account of the general prevalence of bigotry and prejudice.

Yet without pretending to blame the act, we may lament the sad necessity, which drove him to abjure. The different Huguenots of distinction who have left behind them memoirs or letters agree that the King was fond of easing his conscience by the project of a national council for re-uniting the parties by cleansing the Roman church of those unscriptural practices and doctrines which justified the dissent of the Huguenots. Circumstances never permitted the realization of that project ; and such is the force of example, that within a few years every family of distinction had returned to the catholic church. The loss of their protectors rendered the Huguenots an easy prey to their enemies ; and the recompense obtained for their services to Henry IV. was only an additional motive to excite his successors to oppress them.

As a cloak to their ambitious designs, the Jesuits and all the ultramontane faction, whether commissioned from Rome or Madrid, had protested that they were actuated solely by a desire to preserve the unity of the faith, by protecting religion from the designs of a prince who had abandoned their church. But no sooner did the King of France consent to become a Roman catholic than the legate evinced great displeasure, and announced that any ecclesiastic who might go to see Henry of Bourbon, who called himself King of France, would be deprived of his benefice and incur the censures of the church.* The gates of Paris were shut, and the

* Lettre de Monsieur le Legat aux Catholiques de France, dated 23rd July, 1593. Mem. d'Etat de Villeroy, vol. vii. p. 84.

people prohibited from going to St. Denis ; but the attempt was useless, and multitudes went to witness a ceremony which was to put an end to the public calamities.*

Joy so publicly testified, convinced the Duke of Mayenne that his power was nearly at an end. From this time the King was spoken of in terms of respect, and the titles Henry of Bourbon, King of Navarre, or the Bearnais, were discontinued by all except the most fanatical members of the league. The preachers had recourse to their old method of serving the cause by the most violent sermons, in which the King's abjuration was represented in very odious colours. Boucher was conspicuous among them, and preached nine sermons on the subject which were afterwards printed. He maintained that the bishops who had received the abjuration were ministers of hell ; and that even the Pope himself could not re-catholicise the Bearnais.† The people, however, remained cool, and the appeal to their enthusiasm was no longer successful. The Duke of Mayenne perceiving that his prospects were cut off, considered that as he must choose to submit to the King on one hand, or on the other to his nephew, if the King of Spain succeeded in placing him upon the throne ; and being besides advised by his wife to make peace with the King while he could obtain good terms, he concluded a truce in spite of the opposition of the Spaniards.‡

An embassy was dispatched to the Pope to obtain his absolution, and thus remove every scruple which might remain in the minds of the ecclesiastics. This

* Cayet, liv. 5. p. 222. *Journal de Henri IV.* *in loc.*

† *Journal de Henri IV.* vol. i. p. 525.

‡ Dated 31st July, 1593. Cayet, liv. 5.

circumstance, coupled with the publication of the council of Trent in Paris, appears to have excited great apprehensions among the Huguenots. Ever since the King had been joined by any of the catholic nobility, his favours had been almost exclusively bestowed upon them; and when the protestants knew that his abjuration was decided upon, they chiefly regretted the loss of a chief and a protector. But when they heard that the absolution was wanted, they anticipated further persecutions; and their inquiries upon every point, instead of allaying their fears, tended more to augment them. Duplessis writing to the Duke of Bouillon observes, “In taking the King’s abjuration, it was proposed that he should swear to make war against the Huguenots, which he refused to do. This is a great boldness, to dare to make such a demand, when he was barely on the threshold of their door.” He afterwards alludes to the embassy to Rome, and expects that the King will obtain absolution “on condition of his revoking the edict against the Bull; and for penance he will be secretly enjoined to make war against the protestants. The King of Spain will then remain to be satisfied; he can marry his daughter to the King, by which the two interests will be blended; and then the Philistines must be sacrificed as a dowry.”* In a subsequent letter he mentions, “the publication of the council of Trent, during a treaty of peace, appears to discover their intentions sufficiently. It is in short, either to make the peace impossible for the King, or to cause a war to fall upon us.”†

* Dated 10th August, 1593. Mem. de Duplessis, vol. ii.

336.

† Mem. de Duplessis, vol. ii. p. 367.

The absence of a Huguenot leader belonging to the royal family increased the importance of the Duke of Bouillon, who from that time was considered the head of that party; and his ambition made him assist the fervency of Duplessis, in reanimating the zeal of the protestants. A synod had been convened at St. Maixent prior to the King's abjuration; the circumstances of the time made the Huguenots extremely attentive, and at that assembly a plan was agreed upon for deputies from all the churches to meet in the month of December, to petition the King to direct them how their affairs were henceforth to be conducted; to intreat him to order a general assembly of the protestants; and to pray that the truce might be changed into a settled peace.* The King's authority was not so well established that he could dispense with the support of his tried friends; he therefore met their deputies at Mantes, assured them that his conversion had not altered his affection for them, and promised to have their affairs taken into consideration.†

CHAP. XLIX.

BARRIERE MEDITATES AN ATTEMPT ON THE KING'S LIFE;—
REDUCTION OF PARIS;—JOHN CHATEL STABS THE KING;—BANISHMENT OF THE JESUITS.

HENRY's abjuration was no sooner known than a considerable number of persons openly professed their

* D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 364.

† Cayet, liv. 5. p. 269.

attachment to him; all hope of destroying his authority by arms was therefore at an end. But the legate and his fanatical associates would not abandon their design, and by comparing the present state of their affairs, with their condition when Henry III. was advancing against them with a formidable force, they were led to take measures for a similar deliverance. The pulpits had for some time resounded with appeals, calculated to excite any violent enthusiast who would undertake to preserve the church from its pretended dangers. The Jesuit Commolet in one of his sermons, enlarged upon the death of Eglou, King of Moab; he applauded the assassination of the late King, and described James Clement as sitting among the angels of heaven. Having thus applied the text, he exclaimed, “we must have an Ehud; we want an Ehud: be he a monk, a soldier, or a shepherd it is of no consequence; but we must have an Ehud; and this blow is all we want to put our affairs in the situation we desire.”*

Such sermons were preached at Lyons and other towns, as well as at Paris; and among others who were moved by the appeal, was one Peter Barrière, originally a waterman of Orleans, brought up among the lowest classes, he was extremely ignorant; but being very intrepid, he had been employed by the late Duke of Guise in an attempt to carry off the Queen of Navarre. When he had resolved to devote himself to his dreadful attempt, he addressed the grand vicar of the Carmelites at Lyons to have his opinion respecting his enterprise; the friar praised his courage. A capucin, of whom he made the same inquiry,

* *Plaidoyer de M. Arnauld in 1594, p. 50. Journal de Henri IV. vol. i. p. 338.*

told him decidedly that the work was meritorious. Happily for the King a similar consultation was held with a Dominican, named Serapin Bianchi, who was attached to the royalist party, and was employed as a spy by the Duke of Tuscany.

In order to be more sure of preserving the King against the meditated attempt upon his life, the Dominican deferred giving his opinion till the following day, and in the interval sent for a gentleman named Brancaleon, and told him to take particular notice of the person he should meet. Barrière was dismissed with an exhortation to abandon his plan, and Brancaleon immediately warned the King of his danger.

Barrière proceeded to Paris and applied to Aubré, curate of St. André-des-Arcs, he being considered one of the most zealous persons of the league. Aubré told him that the King was not a catholic although he went to mass; he introduced him to Varade, the rector of the Jesuits, who assured him that to kill the King was a great action, but it required courage, and that he must previously confess himself and perform his Easter devotions; he then gave him his benediction, and entrusted him to another Jesuit for confession.* After this encouragement Barrière purchased a double-edged knife, which he had pointed and sharpened, and then set out to kill Henry IV. When he arrived at St. Denis the King was hearing mass; Barrière was awed by his devotion, and his courage failed. He followed the King to various places and again received the sa-

* Jouvency naturally rejects this version of the affair. He says that Varade did every thing in his power to deter Barrière: but he was madly bent upon it, and would not be persuaded. (*Hist. Soc. Jesu.* lib. 12. p. 44.) Jouvency's account would appear more worthy of credit if Varade had acted like the Dominican Bianchi.

erament. At last he was seized by Brancleon, who recognised him at Melun, where he was waiting for an opportunity to give the fatal blow. His answers, when examined, displayed a sort of insanity, which arose from his mind being bewildered by what the different priests had declared to him. His punishment comprised the worst kinds of torture; and, while suffering such dreadful pain, he declared that he expected God would have rendered him invisible after killing the King. His confession was very ample, and he mentioned the names of his advisers, who were all priests or doctors in theology; indeed there is not the least room to doubt their complicity on this occasion.*

The remainder of the year was occupied with negotiations for the Pope's absolution; the want of which enabled the clergy to declare that the abjuration was incomplete; and obstacles were thus raised for the people's returning to their allegiance. But at last it became evident that the King was not the cause of the delay, for, notwithstanding the Pope's refusal to receive his ambassador, he did not cease to solicit a reconciliation. The Duke of Nevers, who was charged with that mission,† was surprised on his arrival at Poschiavo, in the Grison's country, to meet the father Possevin, a Jesuit, who presented a brief from the Pope, and informed him that he could not be received.‡ The Duke of Nevers, however, proceeded to Rome, and had several interviews with

* Barrière was arrested the 26th August, and executed the 31st. Cayet, liv. 5. De Thou, liv. 107. Journal de Henri IV. Pasquier, vol. ii. p. 455.

† The instructions delivered to the Marquis de Pisany by the Duke of Nevers are inserted in *Mem. d'Etat de Villeroy*, vol. iv. p. 327.

‡ 14th Oct. 1593.—*Mem. de Nevers*, vol. ii. p. 405.

Clement, who said to him on one occasion—"Do not tell me that your King is a catholic; I will never believe that he is truly converted, unless an angel come from heaven to whisper it in my ears. As to the catholics who have followed his party I look upon them only as disobedient deserters of religion and the crown, and no more than bastards and sons of the bond woman. Those of the league are lawful children, the real supports, and true pillars of the catholic religion,"*

The first leaguer that submitted to the King was Bois-rosé, who, directly he heard of his conversion, made an offer of his services, and gave up to him the towns of Fescamp and Lislebonne. This example was followed by Vitry, governor of Meaux; the Duke of Mayenne did all in his power to retain that gentleman but in vain. As the truce was about to expire, and there appeared a probability of the war being renewed, he called together the inhabitants of Meaux, who all agreed to his proposals; and in consequence they proclaimed the King immediately: Vitry, moreover, addressed a manifest to the league, explaining his reasons for leaving them.†

The impulse being given other governors went over to the King, and Pontoise was given up by D'Aliercourt. The loss of that place was a great blow to the league, for they had no other town within fifteen leagues of Paris; Villeroy immediately advised Mayenne to treat publicly with the King, but he refused; he said he could not acknowledge him without the Pope's orders. Villeroy perceived

* Cayet, liv. 5. pp. 251—260. *Journal de Henri IV.* vol. i. p. 569.

† 25th Dec. 1593. Cayet, liv. 5. p. 272. *Journal de Henri IV.* vol. i. p. 593. *Mem. de Nevers*, vol. ii. p. 632.

that the cause of the Union was irrecoverable, and immediately joined the royalists. Henry received him graciously, and made him a secretary of state.*

Soon after the city of Lyons was mastered by the royalists. A revolt had taken place there in the previous September, which arose from a public dislike of the Duke of Nemours, the governor, who was placed in confinement in a castle. No thought of serving the King had been entertained by the leaders in this affair; but the royalists were thereby enabled to ascertain their strength, and from that time they formed plans for establishing the King's authority. Mayenne was urged by his family to relieve Nemours from his unpleasant situation; but he had no reason to be anxious for the release of such a rival.† The intrepid defender of Paris had, however, great claims upon the party, and a body of troops were promised to be sent to restore his authority in Lyons. This news determined the royalists to hasten the execution of their plans; they sent to Alphonso Ormano for help, and on the night of the seventh of February they went through the streets calling upon the people to join in their effort for liberty; in a short time the city was barricadoed in every direction. The Archbishop was awakened by the noise, and went to the Hotel-de-Ville, where he remonstrated with the people upon their disobedience, and told them that they ought at least to wait till the Pope had absolved the King. He was answered by shouts of *Vive le Roi*, and the next day every one put on the white scarf. Bonfires were lighted, and every

* Cayet, liv. 6. pp. 293 et seq. Villeroy, vol. ii. pp. 107 et seq.

† In a conversation with Villeroy he pretended to doubt the fact of Nemours being in confinement.—*Mem. d'Etat*, vol. ii. p. 88.

thing done to express the public hatred of the league. The arms of Spain, Savoy, and Nemours, were publicly burned, as well as a personification of the league, under the figure of an old sorceress. *Te Deum* was sung, and public entertainments were given to promote the festivity.*

This event was highly gratifying to the King, who had found that his conversion to catholicism had neither diminished the personal hatred of his enemies, nor relaxed the efforts of Philip II. in opposing him. A courier with dispatches from Mayenne to the Spanish court was seized; and among other papers was a letter stating that the communications of the bearer were deserving of attention and credit. The King saw that he had a good opportunity for learning the real sentiments of Philip II. and having confined the bearer of the dispatches, he sent La Varenne into Spain in his stead, with ample instructions for his guidance. On his arrival at Madrid, he was introduced to Philip, who informed him of all his plans for preventing the absolution of the King of France: "Do not fear," said Philip, "that the Pope will grant it, unless the Prince of Bearn himself goes to Rome to demand it; and if he go there, I will take good care that he shall not easily get back again." He afterwards saw the Infanta; and during the interview she expressed a wish to be informed about the Prince of Bearn; Varenne had expressly given that turn to the conversation, and produced a portrait of Henry IV. with an observation upon the happy results which might be derived from a marriage with him. The Infanta made no reply, but kept the portrait.

* Cayet, liv. 6. p. 298. *Journal de Henri IV.* vol. i. pp. 607 et seq.

Varenne concluded his errand, and had received the orders of the King of Spain; he went to take leave of the Infanta before he quitted Madrid, and as he left the apartments, he was secretly informed that a courier had arrived with intelligence of Mayenne's dispatches having fallen into the hands of the King of France. His situation was very perilous, for his arrest would be followed by an order for him to be put to death; but by using great expedition he was able to make his escape, and communicate the important information he had obtained.* The legate confirmed his report by announcing in a letter addressed to all good catholics, that the absolution would never be granted.†

As there appeared therefore no probability of his obtaining the Pope's absolution, and knowing that without it he could not expect the submission of many of the clergy; and being besides of opinion that if he were crowned, many persons would be led by that circumstance alone to join his cause, he decided on having his coronation solemnized at Chartres; that ceremony took place on the twenty-seventh of February, 1594. The news of this event spread great joy among the royalists, who by this time were numerous in every part of France. Mayenne being informed of the general change of the public feeling, became fearful of being captured in the same way that the people of Lyons had seized his brother Nemours; he quitted Paris in consequence, and went with his family to Soissons in the early part of the month of March.‡

The retreat of Mayenne left Brissac, the governor of

* Cayet, liv. 5. p. 276.

† Villeroy, vol. ii. p. 113.

‡ Le Grain, liv. 6. p. 272. Journal de Henri IV. vol. i. p. 615.

Paris, at liberty to make an advantageous treaty with the King for surrendering the city, and thus take a recompense for services unrewarded by the league. St. Luc, his brother-in-law, was a royalist; him the King charged with the negociation. A dispute had long existed between them respecting the settlement of some property: St. Luc proposed an accommodation, and the meeting was only a pretext for making known his mission. When they met at the Abbey St. Antoine, they were each accompanied by lawyers, who discussed their affairs with earnestness, while St. Luc took Brissac aside and made his proposal which was accepted. As it was necessary to take every precaution, even against the slightest suspicion of a conference, it was given out that the lawyers could not come to any decision, and that they had parted with feelings of great animosity; at the court it was circulated that the King would not easily forgive Brissac's devotion to the cause of Spain.*

On his return into the city, Brissac consulted with the attorney-general Mole and others of the King's party, who would not, however, join in the undertaking, without stipulations for their own interests. But that circumstance was not allowed to become an obstacle; Brissac had sold himself, and therefore could not reproach them for making a price. At last they were all agreed, and arrangements were made for executing the plan. The dawn of the twenty-second of March was the time fixed for opening the gates of Paris to the King.

On the evening of the twenty-first Brissac assembled every officer in whom he could confide. The object of the enterprise was then more fully

* Cayet, liv. 5. p. 334. Journal de Henri IV, vol. i. p. 624.

explained, and each was appointed to the post he was to occupy in its execution. At the same time it was by the greatest hazard that they were not foiled ; for from the communication being extended to a great number, it at last reached the ears of the Spanish ministers and the Sixteen. They sent for Brissac, and told him that there was a rumour of Mayenne having concluded a peace with the King. He professed to suppose such a thing impossible ; but at the same time he admitted, that great precautions were necessary, and that he would immediately go round the walls to see that all was right. Two Spanish captains went with him, and as they had been informed that he was in the plot, they were ordered to kill him directly they perceived any movement in the neighbourhood.*

Fortunately the King's troops did not make their appearance till four o'clock in the morning, when the Spaniards had quitted Brissac, who went to reconnoitre directly he heard the signal : the gate was immediately opened, and the royalists entered the city in silence ; they immediately took possession of the open places and cross roads. A post occupied by some Lansquenets, was the only point at which they met with opposition, and that was very soon overcome. The King's entry was quite triumphal ; he was met at different parts by the public bodies, who offered their homage, while the provost presented the keys of the city. The streets resounded with shouts of *Vive le Roi*, and the power of the league, in a moment, was replaced by the authority of the lawful sovereign, who now appeared as gene-

* Cayet, liv. 5. p. 336. Journal de Henri IV. vol. i. p. 631.

rally beloved, as he had lately been execrated by the multitude.

But all the intrepidity of Henry IV. could not prevent his uneasiness lest an ambuscade were placed to cut him off; and he inquired of Marshal Matignon if he had secured the gate and made certain of retreat in case of need.* Indeed it is probable that if any leaguer had discharged a gun, or made any effort to encourage his party, that a dreadful havoc would have been made amongst the King's troops. Sufficient time, however, was given for their complete occupation of the town; and the few efforts that were afterwards made to disturb the public tranquillity were without effect.

Directly the King perceived that the Louvre and the principal places were in his power, he sent to the Duke of Feria, to demand the liberation of Colonel St. Quentin, who had been put in prison on account of his supposed royalist opinions. The Duke and his companion Ibarra were then informed that they were at liberty to retire when they pleased, provided they made no attempts to resist the occupation of all the posts of the King's soldiers. They accepted the proposal, and left Paris the same day with all the Spanish forces. In the course of the morning, the King went to Notre Dame, where a *Te Deum* was sung; the people crowded on his passage to and from the church, and when his attendants tried to keep them off, he called out, "Let them approach, for they are eager to behold a King."† Proclamation of a general pardon was

* *Journal de Henri IV.* vol. ii. p. 3.

† *Journal de Henri IV.* vol. ii. p. 4.

made ; had Henry IV. consulted his own feelings he would not have shewn the least resentment to any of the league ; but being convinced that some examples were absolutely requisite, the most seditious were ordered to quit the city. Even Varade, the rector of the Jesuits, who had instigated Barrière to attempt his life, was allowed quietly to depart in company with the legate. Cardinal Pellevé died of vexation on hearing of the event ; and the furious Boucher, being fearful lest he should be brought to account for his incendiary sermons, retired with several other doctors into Flanders. De Bourg, the governor of the Bastille, made a shew of resistance ; but when he found that the popular feeling was undivided, he surrendered the fortress ; the occupation of Paris was then complete.*

As a recompense for his zeal in the enterprise, the King promoted Brissac to the rank of Marshal ; Molé, for his exertions in the parliament, was made president à Mortier ; and Le Maitre who was a president under the league, was confirmed in that office. These rewards were an indication of the King's disposition towards all who would join him ; while the surrender of Paris contributed very much to bring about a similar change in the other towns.

The parliament being established once more under royal authority, passed a decree annulling all the acts and decrees which had been made to the prejudice of the King and of his predecessor.† They also proceeded to investigate the conduct of the

* Ibid. pp. 16—30.

† Arrest solennel contre ce qui s'est fait par la Ligue, &c. Dated 30th March, 1594. Mem. de Nevers, vol. ii. p. 691. The parliament was recalled from Tours, by letters patent dated 28th March.

most notorious of the league, and to take measures for punishing them. Very severe punishments were announced for the preachers if taken ; but as they had time allowed them to escape in the interval between the King's return to Paris, and the re-composition of the courts, so most of them remained abroad and underwent the punishment of exile alone.

But the Jesuits were found to have been, one and all, so deeply interested for the Spanish party, that their expulsion from the kingdom was considered necessary. This question occupied a long time. The decree of the university which ordered the proceedings for their banishment, was signed by the faculty without any objection.* The parochial clergy afterwards joined the university, and the cause was tried by the parliament of Paris in July, 1594.

This process has become memorable by the constant reference made to it on every occasion which has brought the Jesuits into collision with the parliaments ; and the charges which were then exhibited against them have been always renewed whenever the public mind has been excited against that society. Antoine Arnauld was advocate for the university ; Louis Dolé for the curates of Paris ; and Claude Duret pleaded on behalf of the defendants. Arnauld's speech contained much violent declamation ; that of Dolé was more argumentative ; the defence was comprised under two heads, one that the accusation against the society was inadmissible ; the other an answer to the accusation, if admitted.†

* *Summa petitionis erat, ut societas Jesu, non solum Parisiis, verum etiam universo regno exterminaretur.* Jouvenci, lib. xii. p. 41.

† Cayet, liv. 5. pp. 379 et seq. et Plaidoyé de M. Antoine Arnauld, &c. 12 et 13 Juillet, 1594.

The public feeling was so much against the Jesuits, and the assertions made by Arnauld entered so deeply into the experience of the nation at large, that the proscription of the order was fully expected.

The doctors of the Sorbonne had joined in the clamour against the Jesuits, and it was principally in consequence of their demand that the trial had been instituted; but two months had scarcely elapsed before the faculty rescinded their former vote, and passed a decree in favour of the fathers.* The members of the league who still remained in Paris, made use of this decree to meet the accusations which were made before the parliament; and the Jesuits remained for that time unmolested.†

The King was in the meantime occupied in the field; and several towns had submitted to him. Laon resisted his forces, and maintained a siege for two months, in which Givry was mortally wounded. Peronne, Beauvais, Amiens, and Noyon, surrendered soon after; in November, a treaty was concluded between the King and the Duke of Lorraine; and in a short time the Duke of Guise gave in his adhesion to the royal cause, and took the oath of fidelity. Every thing seemed to announce the entire pacification of France, by the general establishment of the King's authority; the league was dwindling out of existence, and its decay was rendered still more rapid, by a quarrel between the Dukes

* *Post multauram deliberationem declaravit (concio.) Se quidem censere patres societatis Jesu, redigendos esse in ordinem et disciplinam universitatis; regno autem Gallico esse nequaquam expellendos. Jovencii ut antea.*

† *Hist. de la Sorbonne*, vol. ii. p. 147.

of Mayenne and Feria,* when the nation was astounded by another fanatical attempt to assassinate the King.

On the evening of the twenty-seventh of December, 1594, Henry IV. arrived at the Louvre from Picardy, when he was surrounded by a number of nobles and gentlemen, who pressed forward to offer their congratulations on the favourable state of his affairs. A young man had glided through the crowd unobserved and with a knife aimed a blow at the King's throat. At that moment two gentlemen had approached, making their salutation by bending one knee; and the King with his usual affability stooping to raise them up, received the blow on his mouth. At first the King thought he had been struck by a silly girl named Mathurine, who happened to be close to him; and he expressed himself to that effect. She immediately went to the door of the apartment and declared that no one should go out. The company then looked at each other, and a young man whose person was unknown to them, and who appeared very agitated, was at once charged with the crime. He had thrown away the knife, and at first protested his innocence; but afterwards he confessed that he had given the blow.†

On this examination it was found that he was John Chatel, son of a draper;‡ that he had studied at the college of the Jesuits and that having dreadful alarms of conscience on account of depra-

* Cayet, liv. 5. p. 407.

† Journal de Henri IV. vol. ii. p. 101. Sully, liv. 7.

‡ Jouvencel thus speaks of him, “*huc monstro nomen æterna sepieliendum oblívione, Joannes Castellus, &c.*” no doubt the society would be very happy if this affair could be forgotten.

vities to which he had been addicted, and which seemed to preclude all hopes of God's mercy, he wished to expiate a part of his crimes, under the idea that it would be better to be damned as *four than as eight* ;* and having constantly heard the King declared a tyrant and a heretic, he thought that the act of delivering France from his sway, offered the best chance of preserving him from some part of the torments to which he fancied he was doomed. This miserable wretch suffered the dreadful punishment which awaited regicides, at this period†

The greatest alarm pervaded Paris when the news of the desperate act was promulgated ; and when it was ascertained that the wound was not dangerous, and that no fears were entertained of the knife having been poisoned, the public joy was unbounded ; a *Te Deum* was immediately sung at Notre Dame.

It was with difficulty the populace were restrained from taking vengeance on the Jesuits ; their colleges were surrounded by soldiers ; several of them were taken into custody, and the rest removed to other houses. Among those arrested were Guignard the rector of the college ; Gueret, who had been Chatel's confessor and adviser ; and Haius, or Hay, a Scotchman, who had been remarkable for his zeal against the King's cause. On examining the papers found in the college, there were found in Guignard's handwriting some propositions to the following effect : “ That if some royal blood had been shed at the St. Bartholomew, they would have been spared the evils under which they laboured ; that the act of Jacques Clement was heroic and glorious ; that the crown of France could, and must be transferred to

* *Ut quatuor quam ut octo.*

† Cayet, liv. 6. p. 432—435.

some other family than that of Bourbon ; that the Bearnais although converted to the catholic faith, would be treated more mildly than he deserved if he were confined in some severe convent, there to do penance ; that if he could not be deposed without war, let war be carried on against him, and if that could not be done he should be put to death ;" besides others which were levelled against Henry III. and the protestant princes of Europe.*

The proceedings which had occupied the parliament some months previous were renewed in consequence of this event, and the Jesuits were banished the kingdom by the same decree which condemned John Chatel to death.† Guignard was tried for his treasonable writings, and was sentenced to be hanged ; he was executed on the seventh of January ; his firmness at the place of execution was astonishing, and he has in consequence been revered as a martyr by the society.†

Numerous inquiries were made respecting the Jesuits in every part of the kingdom ; and it was found that those connected with the society were generally in expectation of the attempt upon the monarch's life. A few days before the act was committed, two Swiss were met by some Jesuits at Besançon, on their road to Rome, who told them that very soon the King of Navarre would be killed or wounded. The event was also looked for by the Spanish troops in Brittany, who were sent to aid the expiring league. And from informations taken at

* Cayet, liv. 6. p. 436.

† The decree, dated 29th December, 1594, is given at length by many writers ; see among others Pasquier, vol. i. p. 326.

† Cayet—*Journal de Henri. IV.* Hist. des derniers troubles et Jouvenci, Hist. Soc. Jesu.

Bourges, it appeared that one Francis Jacob, a scholar of the Jesuits in that town, boasted that he would kill the King if it were not already done by another.*

Before these statements could reach the capital, the Jesuits were already commanded to leave the kingdom; they may, therefore, have been highly coloured by the enemies of the society to justify a precipitate decision. To discuss the merits of the often renewed dispute, not only between the Jesuits and the parliaments, but also their quarrels with the secular clergy, would be foreign to our subject; but it may not be improper to remark that the declaration published by them in answer to the decree for their banishment, contains an observation which completely proves the danger and confusion which must attend their establishment in any country, where the people have made the least advances in civilization. After arguing upon the bull of Sixtus V. which deprived the King of his right to the crown, and declaring that the court had usurped the authority of the church in stigmatising as impious and heretical the maxims which Chatel had imbibed, the fathers added, “that lay-judges condemning ecclesiastics, and particularly *religieux*, the immediate subjects of the Pope, were excommunicate.”† As the society can increase its numbers without any controul from the government, the influence of such a body refusing submission to the civil magistrate, necessarily endangers the existence of the government itself.

* Hist. des derniers troubles, vol. ii. p. 53.

† Cayet, liv. 6. p. 438.

CHAP. L.

HENRY ABSOLVED BY THE POPE ;—BATTLE OF FONTAINE FRANÇAISE ;—HAM TAKEN BY HUMIERES ;—CAPTURE OF DOURLENS AND CAMBRAI BY THE SPANIARDS ;—SIEGES OF LA FERE AND CALAIS ;—ASSEMBLY OF NOTABLES AT ROUEN ;—SIEGE OF AMIENS ;—EDICT OF NANTES ;—PEACE WITH SPAIN.

THE ignorance which pervaded the people at large rendered the Pope's absolution requisite for the establishment of the authority of Henry IV. ; and it is clear that if the pontiff had already granted it, John Chatel would not have felt himself at liberty to attempt his life ; his personal safety, therefore, was interested in concluding the difference with the court of Rome. But unfortunately the expulsion of the Jesuits created fresh obstacles in the way of the negociation, and rendered Clement VIII. less willing to consent.* D'Ossat was indefatigable at Rome on the King's behalf, and envoys were sent from time to time with special powers, but to no purpose ; the Pope complained of the restoration of the edict of Poictiers, (1577), and of the banishment of the Jesuits, which he said was to be followed by the expulsion of all the religious orders from France.

* When D'Ossat waited on Clement after the news had reached Rome, the pontiff enlarged very much upon the proceedings of the parliament of Paris ; he concluded by saying, “ *voyez si c'est là le moyen d'accommoder les choses.*—*Lettres du Card. D'Ossat*, part i. p. 36, date 31st January, 1595, Edition in folio, Paris, 1624.

The Spaniards endeavoured to confirm him in such sentiments, and assured him that Henry would again become a Huguenot when he was in possession of all power, and that to preserve France to the holy see, it was not worth while to risk the loss of Spain.* Clement, however, had too much experience to take all their assertions for granted, and felt a desire to be informed of the real state of affairs ; he made inquiries on all sides, and put forward various pretexts for delaying his decision until he had received sufficient information.

He was soon convinced that the league was no longer a cause that he was interested in defending ; and that the feeling of the French authorities was too decided to allow him much longer to tamper with a King who had already displayed uncommon forbearance in continuing to solicit a thing which was valuable only because the multitude were uninformed respecting it. Early in 1595 a messenger had arrived in Paris with a bull from the Pope. The Bishop of Paris told the King that it was the bull for his absolution. Henry highly pleased that the affair had been brought to a conclusion, sent it to the parliament ; but that body either having a better knowledge of Latin than the bishop, or being impressed with a sense of its requiring a careful inspection before it could be received, had it examined with due attention, and it proved to be only a bull for the celebration of the Jubilee. The court declared that they could not receive it, and that they would not receive any thing coming from the Pope until he had recognised the King, and admitted him into the church.†

* D'Ossat, p. 66.

† *Journal de Henri IV.* vol. ii. p. 114.

This circumstance was calculated to subdue Clement's obstinacy, but another event was still more efficacious. Many of the King's advisers recommended the establishment of a Patriarch at the head of the Gallican church.* That would have been as bad as Huguenotism in the eyes of the Vatican; and from the time that Clement received that intelligence he became more courteous to the French envoys. It is related that a facetious observation of Seraphin Olivier convinced the Pope of the danger which attended his refusals and delays. He had constant access to Clement, and was in the habit of conversing familiarly with him:—"What news," said Clement, "respecting the troubles in France?" "It is said," replied Olivier, "that Clement VII. lost England by his hasty disposition, and that Clement VIII. will lose France by his dilatory procedure."† The Cardinals assembled on the second of August, when Clement addressed them at length on the events which had occurred in France; he afterwards consulted each of them in private and found the majority were for giving the absolution.‡ The terms upon which it was to be granted were sent to France, and the King finding them conformable to his intentions authorised his envoys, D'Ossat and Du Perron to accept them. The ceremony of absolving Henry IV. took place on the seventeenth of September, 1595.§ The church of Rome requires that penitents

* Some lines were composed on the occasion, beginning :

Pere saint, France vous eschappe,

Sion fait un Antipape, &c. &c.

See the Satyre Menippeé.

† Davila, liv. 14.

‡ Lettres du Cardinal D'Ossat, part i. p. 65.

§ D'Ossat in a letter of the same date writes, *ça esté ce matin que l'absolution a eté donnée au roy; tout s'yest passé convenablement à la dignité de la couronne.*—*Lettres, &c.* pt. i. p. 68.

who, having deserted her faith, wish to be again received in the fold, be smitten in public with rods; the King was not there to undergo the salutary chastisement; but his representatives, D'Ossat and Du Perron received the blows on their shoulders, while priests recited the *Miserere*.* In order to maintain every item of his prerogative, the Pope declared null and void the absolution which the King had received at St. Denis; and after a full confession of heresy had been read aloud, he pronounced the restoration of Henry IV. to his title of the most Christian King. The sound of trumpets in the church was a signal for the discharge of cannon at the castle of St. Angelo; and while this demonstration of joy took place the King's representatives advanced, and with great fervour kissed the pontiff's feet.† The Spanish faction

* This circumstance has been the subject of considerable discussion: John Botero, an ultramontane, has given an account entitled *De Autoritate et potentia summi Pontificis*, &c. in which he dwells upon the *flagellation* as a means of exalting the church. The work was written in Italian, and being translated into Latin, was published at Cologne in 1569. We read there, *Pontifex cum fustis legatorum terga et humeros turbavit, &c.* The proces verbal which was published by D'Ossat at the time passes over the event in silence, stating that the absolution was given to the ambassadors *solemnitatibus assuetis*. But it is clear that the blows, if not given in reality, were in pretence; and the humiliation of royalty to the papacy was equally great. De Thou (lib. 113) complains of Botero's account; and especially of an expression *fustibus cæsos*, admitting at the same time *LEVITER supplices procuratores tangebat*. D'Ossat also complains of the account. “It was a ceremony,” says he, “which we felt no more, than if a fly had passed over our clothes; while after reading this statement, you would say, that the marks of the blows would remain on our shoulders.”—*Lettres du Card. D'Ossat*, 17th October, 1596, part i. p. 167.

† Cayet, liv. 7. pp. 536 et seq.

unable to prevent the ceremony, had done all in their power to have it celebrated privately.*

This negociation had occupied a considerable part of the year, and in the interval the King had been actively employed in military operations, for he had declared war against Spain in January. The Archduke Ernest published a reply to the King's proclamation, and immediately took measures for carrying on the war with vigour; but very soon after he died at Brussels, and the Spanish government was thus deprived of his services at a time they were very much wanted.† As he had been led to expect the hand of the Infanta, directly she was placed upon the throne of France, the reverses of the league produced a great effect upon him; his disappointment preyed upon his mind and hastened his death, the immediate cause of which was an internal complaint.

On the renewal of the war, the relative condition of the parties and their distinctions underwent a complete revolution; and the characters of a civil war were lost in the strong feelings of nationality. Instead of the Spaniards entering France to assist the league, it was a remnant of that faction that made exertions to help the King of Spain. The Duke of Lorrain's levies now followed the King's standard and put on the white scarf, while the few that adhered to Mayenne renounced their own badge, and assumed the Spanish colour, which was red.

The King's forces were making a regular progress in the reduction of a number of towns in various parts

* D'Ossat, part i. p. 69.

† Henry's proclamation was dated 17th Jauuary, 1595; the Archduke's answer, 13th February; he died 21st February, aged 42. Cayet, liv. 7. p. 483.

of France. Beaune, in Burgundy, surrendered to Marshal Biron;* and Vienne, in Dauphiny, was taken by the Constable Montmorency. These events were followed by intelligence of the advance of a strong force under the Constable of Castille, who had traversed Savoy, and was already in Franche-Comté, where he was joined by Mayenne. Biron intreated his majesty to hasten into Burgundy to oppose the progress of this invader. The King immediately appointed a rendezvous for his nobility at Troyes, and arrived in that town at the end of May. In a few days Biron informed him that he had recovered the town of Dijon, and was besieging the Viscount Tavannes in the castle;† but that he constantly expected the arrival of the Spaniards, who would advance to help their partisans. Henry immediately decided upon a plan which he had already adopted on several occasions with tolerable success; he set out to fall upon the advanced posts of the Spanish army, and from that movement resulted the combat of Fontaine-Française, an encounter so chivalrous and unexampled, that Mathieu compares it to a dream, and observes: “that if it were not well authenticated it would be classed among the romantic exploits of the Rowlands and Olivers, and the four sons of Aymond.”‡

The Spaniards had been detained before Vesoul, which was the only resistance they experienced in

* *Prise des villes et Chateau de Beaune.* This narrative, composed at the time, is inserted in *Mem. de la Ligue*, vol. vi. of the edition by Goujet.

† *Mem. de Tavannes*, p. 139. *Davila*, liv. 14. *De Thou*, liv. 112.

‡ *Hist. des guerres entre les maisons de France et d'Espagne*, p. 35.

their approach; but that place was well defended to the great vexation of Mayenne, who was eager to relieve Tavannes at Dijon.* Without that delay the King would not have been in time to oppose their progress; but having made choice of a thousand horsemen and five hundred carabineers, he divided them into several companies, and sent them out by different routes, with orders to be at Fontaine-Française at a certain time. He arrived within a league of that place before the other divisions, being then accompanied by only forty gentlemen of his suite, and the same number of horsemen, who attended the Baron de Luz. The Marquis de Mirebeau, who had gone to reconnoitre, hastened back to inform the King that he had fallen in with a body of four hundred of the enemy, and that he believed the main body to be at hand. Fortunately Biron arrived at that time with a division of three hundred men; but before all the troops could arrive at the rendezvous, the King found himself engaged with a large division of the enemy's army; the assistance that Biron had brought enabled him to maintain the unequal conflict; and the determined bravery of his followers, who rallied and charged with great promptness, made the enemy retreat, for they could not believe that so small a body of men would have given battle, unless they were sure of being supported; the arrival of a division was thought to be the whole army of the royalists advancing, and Mayenne and the Constable of Castille immediately withdrew their troops beyond the Saône. The King had not nine hundred men with him at any time during

* Before the assistance could arrive the Viscount Tavannes had thought it necessary to retire to Talan.—*Mem. de Tavannes*, p. 139.

the fight, and on several occasions he charged into the midst of the enemy's cavalry with less than a hundred followers: the enemy's force was at least two thousand, who were encouraged by the vicinity of ten thousand infantry. The Spaniards had above two hundred killed and wounded; the French lost only six persons.*

There appears temerity in this action on the part of the King; for if he had fallen on the occasion, it is highly probable that France would have been overpowered by the Spanish faction. But it was observed by a contemporary, that whether he fought or retired, the danger was equally great.† Indeed, if he had not arrested the enemy's progress as he did, Dijon would have been again lost, and a protracted war would have been the consequence. He is said to have been urged to retreat before it was too late; but he observed that he wanted assistance, not advice. His experience, moreover, satisfied him that the enemy would have overwhelmed him had he attempted to retreat; and he was so convinced of his danger, that he said afterwards, he had fought for his life rather than for victory.‡

This check prevented the Spaniards from effectually co-operating with their forces in the north of France, on which side they had always made their approaches. They already possessed three towns in Picardy: viz. Ham, Soissons, and La Fère. The former place was taken at the end of June by Humieres. The garrison very obstinately defended the

* 5th June, 1595. Cayet, D'Aubigné, Mathieu, Davila, Sully, et Mem, de Guillaume de Tavannes at the end.

† Mathieu.—*Hist. des guerres entre les maisons de France et d'Espagne*, p. 36.

‡ Porefixe, liv. ii: *in loc.* Mathieu, vol. ii. liv. 1. pt. 187.

town, and at last set fire to the houses, in order to expel the assailants who had gained admission by means of an understanding with a concealed royalist. Advice had been sent to the Duke of Bouillon of what was passing, and by his assistance the place was mastered, and the garrison put to the sword. Humieres himself was killed at the beginning of the fight, and it was the great attachment of his followers to him that caused them to give no quarter in their exasperation.*

The Spaniards compensated for this loss by taking Castellet and Dourlans ; they besieged the latter place at the close of July. The Dukes of Nevers and Bouillon, and the Admiral Villars, were all pressing forward to relieve the town, and their united force was fully adequate to keep in check the Count de Fuentes, who commanded the Spanish army. But unfortunately there was a want of proper understanding among them ; by some attributed to mutual jealousy, each wishing to obtain the honour of raising the siege. The consequence of which was that Villars was engaged with a force far superior to his own and sustained a total defeat. When it was known that Villars was a prisoner, several officers of the league reproached him with having deserted their cause. Sassenval, his companion, also a prisoner, addressed some spirited remarks to them on the disgrace of wearing the livery of an enemy of their country. He was immediately assailed with many reproaches, and both Villars and himself were put to death on the spot. Dourlans was taken soon after, when the Spaniards executed dreadful reprisals upon the inhabitants ; they spared neither sex nor

* Cayet, liv. 7. p. 502.—*Hist. des derniers troubles*, vol. ii. p. 59.

age, and called to each other to be revenged for the taking of Ham. More than three thousand persons were put to death.*

Fuentes then besieged Cambray, which he took after a resistance of two months. His force was seventeen thousand men, and seventy pieces of cannon; but the Duke of Rethelois, the governor,† assisted by De Vie, made such a defence, that he was preparing to convert the siege into a blockade, when the people of the town revolted and opened the gates to the Spaniards. The governor and his friends retired to the citadel, and afterwards obtained very honourable terms.‡

Had such reverses occurred at an earlier period they would have seriously prejudiced the King's cause; but while these events took place in the north of France the King received his absolution from Rome, and Mayenne treated with him for a general suspension of hostilities.§ There was now very great hope of peace being restored to this distracted country; for although Mayenne's adhesion was not completed till several months later, it was evident that the chief difficulties in the way of a negociation were overcome. Still the King would not relax in his operations against the Spaniards; and instead of remaining idle during the winter, he sent Laverdin into Brittany, while he commenced the siege of La Fère.||

* Mem. de Sully, liv. 7, et Journal de Henri IV. in *loc.* Cayet, liv. vii. p. 505—507. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 358. Mathieu.—*Hist. des guerres, &c.* p. 37.

† Son of the Duke of Nevers.

‡ 9th Oct. 1595, Cayet, liv. 7. p. 528. Mathieu et D'Aubigné *ut antea*.

§ Articles dated 23rd Sept. 1595.

|| Nov. 1595. Cayet, Mathieu, D'Aubigné.

This siege lasted six months,* during which interval the King received the submissions of many persons of rank, and recovered possession of several towns. Marseilles was regained from the enemy almost at the moment it was to be delivered over to the Spanish government by the Consul Casault, who was in treaty with Charles Doria for that object. Peter Liberta, who kept one of the gates of Marseilles, observed that Casault and Louis D'Aix, his chief confederate, went out of the town every day with their guards; and being desirous of serving the King he resolved to shut the gates upon them when they were out, or to kill them by an ambuscade near the gate; after which the town could be easily mastered. He informed the Duke of Guise of his plan, which was carried into execution on the seventeenth of February, 1596. Casault was killed by Liberta and his brother, and the town immediately resounded with shouts of *Vive le Roi.*†

Toulouse was brought back to the King's authority by Joyeuse, who received the dignity of Marshal as the price of his submission. The Duke of Nemours, son of the governor of Paris, who had died a few months previous, had no difficulty in obtaining an edict from the King; it was granted at the same time with Mayenne's, which, however, required some discussion, and was not registered by the parliaments without opposition. He obtained three towns as security, which he was to hold for six years, and no

* Mem. de Sully, liv. 8. "It was the longest," says he, "that Henry had on hand: the town was extremely well fortified, and had a numerous garrison."

† Hist. des derniers troubles, vol. ii. pp. 62 et seq. Cayet, liv. viii. p. 585. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 375.

charge whatever was allowed to be brought against him for any part he had taken in the late troubles.*

The siege of La Fère was an irresistible inducement for D'Aubigné to offer his services to the King. His speeches at the synodical meetings had been very free, and the King had in consequence become so inveterate against him, that he declared he would have him put to death if he could take him. The extreme danger which presented itself did not deter D'Aubigné from going to the camp; and to the surprise of all, he was received in a very friendly manner. Henry consulted him in private, and treated him with great affability. Chatel's recent attempt on his life becoming the subject of conversation, He addressed the King to the following effect; “Sire! as you have as yet renounced God with your lips alone, they alone have been pierced; but whenever your heart renounces him, that will receive the blow.” During the siege the King had a severe illness, and his mind was harassed by reflections upon his abjuration of the reformed religion. He unbosomed himself to D'Aubigné, and asked his candid sentiments on the subject. D'Aubigné wished to introduce a minister who would be better able to discuss such matters; but that could not be done without alarming the catholics, and therefore was not permitted. Henry then locked the door of the chamber, and called upon D'Aubigné solemnly to declare his conscientious opinions respecting the sin he had incurred by changing his religion. They conversed together for several hours and joined in prayer at intervals; the King's mind became more easy, and his fears considerably diminished; but his

* Recueil des Edits de Henri IV.

disorder soon after began to abate, and as he was then able to take part in the active scenes of government, he never renewed the discussion.*

La Fère was so closely blockaded, that to use the expression of a contemporary, the garrison had nothing free but the air.† They supported all their fatigues and privations by confident expectations of relief, which the Cardinal, Albert of Austria, was bringing to them. Although his education and pursuits had nothing in common with military affairs, he proved himself to be fully qualified for commanding an army. He quitted Brussels with a declared intention of relieving La Fère; but instead of going there, he suddenly attacked, and took possession of Calais; Ardres was his next object, but that siege occupied him a month; and before he had finished the enterprise La Fère had capitulated.‡

The citadel of Calais held out some time after the town was taken, and Henry sent over to Elizabeth for assistance; reminding her of her often repeated promises.§ Sancy was first sent, and afterwards the Duke of Bouillon; but as she found they were too faithful to their own King and country to allow her to suppose that she would be permitted to retain Calais, she told them that she would communicate with their King through the medium of her own ambassador, Sidney. He informed Henry that the Queen of England would give him great assistance in carrying on the war with Spain, on condition

* Vie de D'Aubigné, p. 101. Hist. Univ. vol. iii. p. 376-377.

† Mathieu, Hist. des guerres, &c.

‡ Calais was taken 17th April, 1596. Ardres, 23rd May; La Fère capitulated 16th May. Cayet, Mathieu, D'Aubigné and De Thou.

§ Discours de M. Sancy, p. 98, 99. Mem. d'Etat. vol. v.

that Calais, when re-taken, should be given up to her as a security for the sums of money she had advanced. Henry was indignant at the proposal, and said as he turned away from the ambassador, “ If I must be bitten, I would quite as soon it were by a lion, as by a lioness.”* Afterwards, when the Spaniards obtained full possession of the town, he was far from testifying regret, but exhorted those around him to take courage, “ for with the help of Heaven,” said he, “ we will recover the place before it has been as many days in the hands of the Spaniards as our ancestors suffered it to remain years in the hands of the English.”†

In order to obtain the means of carrying on the war with vigour it was necessary to introduce order into the state, and an assembly of notables was convoked at Rouen. The meeting was opened on the fourth of November, 1596, when the King pronounced a discourse which has been preserved by many French historians, who consider it a model of candour and eloquence. “ If,” said his majesty, “ if I wished to acquire the reputation of an orator, I should have learned some fine long harangue, and have spoken it here with great gravity; but my desire extends to two more glorious titles, the deliverer, and the restorer of the state. For that purpose I have assembled you, you know to your own costs, as I know to mine, that when God called me to this crown, I found France not only ruined, but almost lost for Frenchmen. By divine assistance, by the prayers and counsels of my faithful servants, by the swords of my brave and generous nobles,

* Mathieu, vol. ii. liv. 2. p. 223.

† De Bury. *Hist. de Henri IV.* vol. iii. p. 33.

and by my own toils and exertions, I have saved France from destruction ; let us now preserve her from ruin. Participate, my dear subjects, in this second glory, as you have done in the first. I have not called you as my predecessors did, to order you to approve of my wishes ; I have assembled you to have your advice, to place confidence in your opinions, to adopt them ; in short, to place myself in your hands. It is a desire that rarely seizes veteran and victorious Kings, but the ardent love which I bear to my subjects, makes me find every thing easy and honourable. My chancellor will inform you more particularly of my wishes."*

The whole winter was taken up with the discussions of this assembly. Many plans were proposed for establishing a good system of finance ; but it would be some time before they could come into operation, and the King required money for carrying on the war. He made Sully his superintendent of finances, which was his readiest way to restore order in the public accounts. That exemplary man diminished the expenditure by proper reforms, and procured a supply of funds by turning into the public coffers large sums which the distracted state of the kingdom had allowed to be swallowed up by greedy and extravagant individuals.† The old courtiers were alarmed at such a reform, and regretted their supineness in suffering him to join the council.‡

But the scantiness of his pecuniary supplies was

* Cayet, liv. 8. p. 629. Pérefixe, liv. 2.

† "Whatever fraud or error," says Sully, " might have crept into the finances, I imagined that neither of them could be so secret nor so general, that we could not ultimately find the origin and the proof."—*Mem. de Sully*, liv. 8. p. 95.

‡ *Messieurs du conseil du roi palirent à la vue de mon projet*, ibid. p. 96.

not the only circumstance that impeded Henry's government; the Huguenots had renewed their meetings, and represented in a memorial, that they were entitled to privileges more extensive than those granted by the edict of Poictiers. The King begged them to defer the discussion of their claims until the public affairs gave him a better opportunity of securing and defining the rights and interests of all parties. However, as the protestants had taken up an opinion that the King was no longer their friend, every measure which bore any relation to such an idea was highly coloured and enlarged upon by the more zealous members of their synods; and meetings were held at Vendôme, Saumur, Loudun and Châtellerault, in furtherance of their general plans. The Duke of Mercœur who still maintained himself in Brittany, was encouraged by the hope that religious differences would again destroy the regal authority, in which case he confidently expected to establish an independant sovereignty in his province. Other nobles secretly indulged similar hopes; and the King was fearful that along with those contemplated principalities, a religious republic would spring up in the heart of his kingdom. He did not object to the protestants having privileges; but he wished them to be conferred by him, not obtained by them; and for that reason, he was careful that all their public acts should bear the character of royal sanction, although they were directly in opposition to his wishes.

The Spaniards, in the meantime, continued their operations and astonished the King, and indeed the whole nation, by seizing upon Amiens by stratagem. Having placed a sufficient number of men in ambuscade around the town, a few were sent in disguised as countrymen. They were stopped at the gate, and

asked various questions. Pretending to be very fatigued, they placed their loads on the ground, and rested at the gate, until they observed some of their confederates approaching, who were also disguised and conducting a wagon. One of them then took up his load to put it on his shoulders, and having secretly opened the sack's mouth, he let fall a great quantity of nuts at the gate. The guards amused themselves in collecting the countryman's nuts; and while they were thus occupied, the wagon had arrived within the gate-posts. One of the confederates immediately loosed his horses, leaving the wagon to prevent the gate being shut, while the others fell upon the guards. The signal was then given to the Spanish troops in the neighbourhood; they advanced immediately and completed the enterprise.*

The possession of Amiens enabled the Spaniards to make excursions to the gates of Paris, and it was imperative that the recovery of the town should be immediately attempted. When the King heard of it he seemed to reflect upon himself for devoting so much of his time to the pleasures of his court and the society of his mistress. He observed with emphasis, "we have had enough of the King of France, it is now time to be King of Navarre;" and told the weeping Gabrielle d'Estrées, that he must again leave her to undergo the fatigues and dangers of another war.†

Sully hastily equipped an army with a good train of artillery, ammunition, provisions, and conve-

* Cayet, liv. 9. p. 668. D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 387. De Thou, liv. 118.

† Journal de Henri IV. vol. ii. p. 193.

niences for the sick and wounded.* But to obtain funds for supplying this, he was obliged to raise fresh imposts upon edicts which required to be registered by the parliament. Instead of money that body sent remonstrances. Henry wrote to the President Harlay, that those who defended the state ought to be supported and provided for. “Give me an army,” said the King “and I will cheerfully give my life to save you and restore France.” The edicts were notwithstanding rejected, and the president went to the King to represent the necessities of the state. “The greatest necessity of the state,” replied the King, “is to be cleared of its enemies; you are like the fools at Amiens who refused me a subsidy of two thousand crowns and have lost a million. I am going to fight the enemy, and if I get shot in the head you will find out what it is to have lost your King.” Henry IV. could not obtain the registration of his edicts, without using compulsory measures; he effected his object to preserve his dignity; but with unequalled goodness of heart he revoked the edicts afterwards.†

The King besieged Amiens with resolution and promptitude; and as the town was of great importance, the French nobility and gentry hastened to assist their sovereign; while the Spanish government assured Hernand-Tillo, the-commander of the garrison, that he might depend upon the arrival of relief. The siege lasted six months, and produced examples of great spirit on both sides.

The Cardinal, Albert of Austria, did not make his appearance till September, by which time the town was reduced to great extremity. He brought with him

* Mem. de Sully, liv. 9. p. 117. † Hist. du Parlement de Paris, ch. 38.

a good army, and made an attempt to relieve the besieged; but after a skirmish with the King's troops, he drew off his forces to Dourlans. This so dispirited the garrison, that they immediately proposed to capitulate; and the King entered Amiens on the twenty-fifth of September.* This event was a death blow to the expiring league, and there remained only the Duke of Mercoeur to subdue or win over; he had lately lost Rechfort and Craon, his frontier towns; and Dinan his strong hold had been surprised by the people of St. Malo. He was, therefore, quite ready to accept the terms which he understood the King was willing to grant; and when Henry went early the following year into Brittany to settle the affairs of that province, Mercoeur met him at Angers, took the oath of allegiance, and delivered up all the places he held;† he afterwards obtained an edict of indemnity, similar to those granted the other chiefs of the league.‡

The court of Spain was by this time convinced of the necessity of making peace with France, and persons on both sides were commissioned to negotiate a treaty. The King at the same time took measures for settling the affairs of the Huguenots. He had been obliged to purchase the submission of many leaguers; some with governments, others with money; but the Huguenots' price was of a different description; they feared that ultimately they should become victims of the bigotry of the catholics, and loudly demanded securities from the King, as a protection from their enemies. Henry

* Cayet. Mathieu, et D'Aubigne, *in loc.*

† According to Sully, the people of Nantes were preparing to deliver Mercoeur into the King's hands. Mem. liv. 9.

‡ Cayet, liv. 9. p. 710. *Et Recueil des Edits, de Henri IV.*

was not unwilling to grant their request ; he remembered that he had long been their chief, and that their blood had been freely shed in his cause. Commissioners had been previously appointed to draw up articles for them, and for above a twelve month the King had been solicited to sign the edict ; this he refused to do, alleging, as his principal reason, that it would be more satisfactory for him to grant the edict after he had subdued his enemies and was in full possession of his authority ; for then it could not be said that the Huguenots had extorted it from him in a time of need ; and, before the edict was signed, he gave a proof of his independence by retrenching some articles which did not please him.*

The edict of Nantes was signed on the thirtieth of April, 1598. From its provisions it appears to have been modelled upon that of Poictiers, and comprised the conventions of Bergerac and Fleix. The protestants were allowed the most ample liberty of conscience ; but the public exercise of their religion, was limited to certain parts of the kingdom. They were compelled to submit to the exterior police of the Romish church, by keeping festivals, paying tithes, &c. They were declared eligible to all offices ; their poor were to be received into the hospitals ; and for their protection, mixed chambers were to be established in all the parliaments.

The parliament of Baris refused to register the edict, and made a remonstrance to the King ; the counsellors expressed themselves with great warmth, and declared that they would not receive their new colleagues contemplated in the edict. The King

* D'Aubigné, vol. iii. p. 460.

Answered them in an authoritative tone ; and told them that he knew how to put down those who opposed him ; adding, in his pithy style, "I have climbed the walls, and can easily get over the barricades."* But the monarch who had sent for the unruly counsellors, and threatened to enforce his will, would not dismiss them from his presence without displaying the feelings of a common parent ; he appealed to their sense, their patriotism, and their justice, and by that means induced them to yield to his wishes.

The peace with Spain was concluded at Vervins, and signed by the plenipotentiaries on the second of May, the King ratified it at Paris on the twenty-second of June.† The last treaty with Spain which was that of Chateau-Cambresis in the reign of Henry II. had cost France many towns ; but the treaty of Vervins was entirely to the advantage of that kingdom. Henry IV. was aware that Philip II. was even more in want of peace than himself ; and therefore made his own terms ; but common justice required the restitution of the towns improperly held by the Spaniards, while the haughty Philip consoled himself for his defeat by an empty protest, that the plenipotentiaries did not represent him, but the Viceroy of the Netherlands.

" Thus," says Sully,‡ "in spite of so powerful a league, comprising the Pope, the Emperor, the King of Spain, the Duke of Savoy, and all the ecclesiastics of Christendom, the King effected his designs, and crowned them with a glorious peace.

* *Ibid.* p. 461.

† These dates are given by Mathieu. *Hist. des guerres, &c.* but Le Grain in his *Decade*, liv. 7. says, the treaty was published 12th of June.

‡ *Memoirs*, liv. 9. at the end.

The treaty of Vervins delivered France from the evils of a foreign warfare ; while the domestic peace of the country was settled by the edict of Nantes, which secured to the protestants both their civil and religious rights. By a singular coincidence the town of Nantes witnessed the close of the civil wars and troubles which had commenced with an assembly held in that very place nearly forty years before, when the violence and ambition of the Guises drove the Huguenots to seek for safety in a confederacy. Such a measure offered a hope of gaining protection if not redress ; but failing in the execution, it contributed to assist their enemies, and was in reality the spark which originated the political conflagration.

History does not afford an example of a more desolating war than that which raged in France, almost without intermission, for the remainder of the sixteenth century : by its conclusion a new era seemed to dawn upon the nation. Very sanguine hopes were entertained of the happy results of the edict of Nantes ; which it is too well known were cruelly disappointed ; but the circumstances which led to, and accompanied its revocation, form the subject of a distinct history, and are of sufficient importance to be discussed in a separate work. Although connected with this history in many respects, the events of the seventeenth century, as a whole, are quite distinct, whether we consider the parties who were concerned, or the ostensible reasons of their conduct. The protestants of the sixteenth century were chiefly anxious to see the catholic religion purified and freed from a multitude of superstitions and errors : they wished to restore the practices of primitive Christianity. But the principal aim of their descendants was to preserve the pri-

vileges already obtained; they desired to continue separated from the Romish church, which by proclaiming the decrees of the council of Trent, had publicly sanctioned the gross errors of the dark ages.

A difference equally great is to be traced in the objects and motives of their persecutors of each period: during the former, we remark a hatred of innovation upon religious affairs; in the latter, a malignant spirit of ambition, that could not brook the existence of a body of men, whose opinions were not to be chained by the declarations of any other authority than the Holy Scriptures. Bigotry was the passion which the court of France developed at both periods; but fanaticism called it into action under the princes of the house of Valois, while state policy was its strongest impulse under Louis XIV., a prince whose annals shine with military trophies; yet who, by a strange contradiction, became the tool of a Jesuit confessor: he inflamed the King's zeal for the Romish religion, and his recommendations have completely tarnished that otherwise brilliant reign: *Sed cedunt arma togæ.*

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THE END.

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